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THE WORKS

OF

ALEXANDER HAMILTON

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THE WORKS

OF

ALEXANDER HAMILTON

EDITED BY

HENRY CABOT LODGE

AUTHOR OF "LIFE AND LETTERS OF GEORGE CABOT," "A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH COLONIES IN AMERICA," "ALEXANDER HAMILTON" AND "DANIEL WEBSTER" (IN "AMERICAN STATESMEN" SERIES), AND "STUDIES IN HISTORY"

"The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power."

[HAMILTON—*The Farmer Refuted*, 1775, Æt. 18.]

"We are laboring hard to establish in this country principles more and more *national*, and free from all foreign ingredients, so that we may be neither 'Greeks nor Trojans,' but truly Americans."—[HAMILTON TO KING, 1796, Æt. 39.]

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PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.

(CONTINUED.)

PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.

(CONTINUED.)

TO WASHINGTON.

MORRISTOWN, May 2, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

I am extremely sorry your Excellency has been troubled with the affair to which the papers transmitted in your letter of this morning relate. Admitting the possibility of Doctor Gordon's not being the author of what I must always call a calumny, and had he not been an irreconcilable enemy to plain dealing, the matter might have been brought to a very easy issue without the necessity of an appeal to you. My determination, however, on the contents of his letter will be a very summary one. I shall not follow him in his labored digressions, because the scope of some of them is to me unintelligible, and the rest do not merit an answer.

So far from being disposed to comply with the Doctor's conditions to avoid an inquiry, I consider the proposal he makes as a finishing stroke to that display of absurdity, littleness, and effrontery which characterizes the whole proceeding on his part, and I defy the utmost extent of his malignity and intrigue. I shall ever continue to hold him in the highest contempt,—to believe him to be the conniver of the charge against me till he gives up some other person as the author, and to represent him as such to all those with whom I have occasion to converse on the subject. I shall always speak of him in those terms which a sense of injury and a conviction of his worthlessness dictate.

I hope your Excellency will excuse the asperity of my expressions, which my respect for you would induce me to sup-

press, did I not owe it to my sensibility, wounded by the most barbarous attack upon my reputation and principles, to speak without reserve. I flatter myself you, sir, are too well acquainted with my way of thinking to entertain the least doubt of my innocence, and I beg leave to assure you that nothing will give me greater pleasure than to have the matter properly investigated.

I am only apprehensive that the Doctor will so manage it as that it will be found *inexpedient* to bring it to a public discussion, and that the knowledge of circumstances will be confined to a few, to be handed about as may best suit his purposes, to the prejudice of my character. Your Excellency, too, I trust, will see the propriety of that delicacy by which I am withheld from making any formal appeal to public authority in my own justification. 'T is the business of my accuser to bring me to justice, and, by anticipating him, I should not fail to incur the imputation of self-importance. I return your Excellency the papers from Doctor Gordon.*

TO BARON STEUBEN.

May 10, 1780.

DEAR BARON:

General Knox, in conversation, has observed to the General, that instead of sending to Philadelphia for the fifteen hundred arms mentioned in your letter of the sixth, and sending those here to that place to be fitted, it would be a great saving of expense, in the article of transportation, to have the bayonets and accoutrements brought on without the arms, and fitted to those now here; which can easily be done at the Park. The question is, if the arms here have no other defect than want of bayonets. The General will be glad to know what you think of General Knox's proposal. It seems to him eligible, unless there are reasons he is not acquainted with.

If there are any other articles you wish to have sent for

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers. It does not appear that Dr. Gordon ever brought the matter to the notice of the authorities of the State.

(the General thinks you mentioned something of the kind to him), he will be glad to know what they are.

We have heard from the Marquis. He will be here at dinner. Will you dine with us also? The General requests it.

TO JAMES DUANE.

May 14, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR:

This will be handed you by the Marquis (de Lafayette), who brings us very important intelligence. The General communicates the substance of it in a private letter to you, and proposes a measure which all deem essential.* For God's sake, my dear sir, engage Congress to adopt it, and come to a speedy decision. We have not a moment to lose. Were we to improve every instant of the interval, we should have too little time for what we have to do. The expected succor may arrive in the beginning of June; in all probability it will not be later than the middle. In the last case we have not a month to make our preparations in, and in this short period we must collect men, form magazines, and do a thousand things of as much difficulty as importance. The propriety of the measure proposed is so obvious that an hour ought to decide it, and if any new members are to come, they ought to set out instantly with all expedition for headquarters.

Allow me, my dear sir, to give you a hint. The General will often be glad to consult the committee on particular points, but it will be inexpedient that he should be obliged to do it oftener than he thinks proper, or any peculiar case may require. Their powers should be formed accordingly. It is the essence of many military operations, that they should be trusted to as few as possible.

* Writings of Washington, vii., 32. Lafayette brought news of the coming of the French fleet with the army of Rochambeau. The measure urged by Washington was the appointment of a committee by Congress with full powers to raise men and supplies and to arrange for coöperation with the French. A committee was raised as Washington suggested, and consisted of Philip Schuyler, John Mathews, and Nathaniel Peabody.

The Marquis has a title to all the love of all America; but you know he has a thousand little whims to satisfy; one of these he *will have* me to write to some friend in Congress about. He is desirous of having the captain of the frigate in which he came complimented; and gives several pretty instances of his punctuality and disinterestedness. He wishes Congress to pass some resolutions of thanks, and to recommend him to their minister in France, to be recommended to the French court. The first of these is practicable. The last I think might have an officious appearance. The *essential* services the Marquis has rendered America in France give him a claim for all that can be done with propriety; but Congress must not commit themselves.

Again, my dear sir, I must entreat you to use the spur on the present occasion. The fate of America is perhaps suspended on the issue; if we are found unprepared, it must disgrace us in the eyes of all Europe, besides defeating the good intentions of our allies, and losing the happiest opportunity we ever have had to save ourselves.

TO GENERAL GREENE.

May 16, 1780.

MY DEAR GENERAL:

When you ask my opinion as a friend, I must always act the part of a true friend, however frequently the advice I give may happen to clash with your feelings, justly irritated by injuries which you have not merited. Considering the Board of Treasury as so many individuals, the complexion of their letter to you would abundantly justify the asperity of your reply; but considering them as a public body, one of the first in the State, policy pronounces it to be too great. We are entered deeply in a contest on which our all depends. We must endeavor to rub through it, sometimes even at the expense of our feelings. The treasury will always be essential to your department. The board conducting it will necessarily have no small influence. You may continue at the head of the department. I should think it imprudent to

push differences to extremity, or to convert the airs of official consequence and the temporary work of popular prejudice into rooted personal resentments. This appears to me to be the tendency of the present letter. The board, from the necessity of our affairs, may sue for peace, but they will hate you for the humiliation you bring upon them; and they may have it in their power to embarrass your operations. I would have you show a sensibility of injury, but I would wish you to do it in milder terms.*

TO BARON STEUBEN.

June 7, 1780.

DEAR BARON:

I am commanded by the General to inform you that the enemy are out in considerable force, and, by the last advice, were advancing this way. We are going to meet them. The General is just set out for Chatham, and will be happy to meet you there.

TO WASHINGTON.

June 8, 1780.

SIR:

I have seen the enemy. Those in view I calculate at about three thousand; there may be, and probably enough are, others out of sight. They have sent all their horse to the other side, except about fifty or sixty. Their baggage, it is agreed on all hands, has also been sent across, and their wounded. It is not ascertained that any of their infantry have passed to the other side. There are four or five hundred on the opposite point, but it is uncertain whether they

* This letter is reprinted from Geo. W. Greene's "Life of General Greene," ii., p. 287; it is also given in the "History of the Republic," ii., 4. The Treasury Board had written to Greene, who was at that time quartermaster-general, in terms implying a doubt of his integrity. He was naturally much incensed, and wrote a reply, which he submitted to Hamilton, who wrote this letter in response. Greene professed himself unable to adopt a milder tone, but consulted Hamilton as to another draft. The date is that given by Mr. Greene.

are those who went from this side, or those who were on Staten Island; I rather suppose the former.

Different conjectures may be made. The present movement may be calculated to draw us down and betray us into an action. They may have desisted from their intention of passing till night, for fear of our falling upon their rear. I believe this is the case; for, as they have but few boats, it would certainly be a delicate manœuvre to cross in our face. We are taking measures to watch their motions to-night as closely as possible. An incessant but *very light* skirmishing. Very few boats, not more than enough to carry three or four hundred men at a time; it is likely more will come down this evening.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE TERNAY.*

AU CAP HENRY, le 13 Juin, 1780.

MONSIEUR LE CHEVALIER:

Je suis envoyé par le Général Washington au Cap Henry pour y attendre votre escadre, et vous remettre ainsi qu' à Monsieur le Comte de Rochambeau, les dépêches de Monsieur le Marquis de Lafayette. Ces dépêches, Monsieur le Chevalier, contiennent le plan d'opérations que le Général Washington a l'honneur de vous proposer, la situation des ennemies, et la nôtre relativement aux forces respectives des deux parties, aux points occupés, aux moyens de subsistance et cetéra; tous les changemens qui pouvaient survenir sur ces objets doivent m' être communiqués, afin qu' à votre arrivée vous puissiez avoir sous les yeux le plus de données possibles. Les mêmes détails vous attendent à Rhode Island, et si vous ne devez les reçevoir qu' après être arrivé, il est presque indifférent, Monsieur le Chevalier, que votre escadre atterisse à Rhode Island ou au Cap Henry; mais il y a des circonstances qui, si elles vous étaient connues, tendraient peut

* Charles Louis d'Arsac de Ternay, admiral and commander of the fleet that brought Rochambeau and his army to America. He reached Newport with his fleet July 10, 1780, and died there on December 15th of the same year, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

être à vous déterminer plustôt pour l'un de ces points que pour l'autre, ou méme pour un troisième point que vos instructions n'ont pu prévoir. C'est pour vous rendre compte de ces circonstances que je saisis l'occasion du fier Rodrique ; heureux si, dans une conjoncture où les moments sont d'une si grande importance, cette lettre peut anticiper de quelques jours vos dispositions.

1°. Par le plan proposé à vous, Monsieur le Chevalier, et à Monsieur le Comte de Rochambeau, les efforts combinés de l'armée Française et Americaine doivent se porter sur New York, et vous êtes instamment prié de vous rendre immédiatement à Sandy Hook.

2°. Suivant les informations qui m' ont été récemment fournies par le Gouverneur de la Virginie, la ville de Charleston est prise ; les ennemis embarquent une partie des troupes qui en ont fait la conquête, et d'après la certitude où nous sommes que la destination de votre escadre leur est connue, il semble que cet embarquement pourrait bien avoir pour objet de renforcer la garnison de New York.

3°. La somme de leurs forces navales sur ce continent se borne à trois vaisseaux de ligne, un de 50 canons, deux de 44, et quelques frégates à Charleston ; un vaisseau de 74 et quelques frégates, sortis de New York depuis trois semaines et dont nous ignorons la destination.

Ainsi, Monsieur le Chevalier, la première de ces considérations vous invite à Sandy Hook ; la seconde réclame votre atterrage sur un point d'où vous puissiez être en mesure d'intercepter les secours destinés pour New York ; et la troisième vous offre un terme de comparaison entre la plus grande force qui puisse escorter ces secours, et cette avec laquelle vous pouvez les attaquer. Il est encore à observer qu' excepté les trois vaisseaux de ligne, tous les autres (à Charleston) sont dans le port, et que les plus gros n'en peuvent sortir, qu'après avoir été allégés, et avec la concurrence d'une haute marrée et d'un vent propice.

Telles sont, Monsieur le Chevalier, les choses dont ma mission a pour objet de vous rendre compte, et comme il est de

toute importance que ces informations vous parviennent le plus tôt possible, j'ai cru ne pas devoir négliger la probabilité, qui s'offre de les faire dévancer votre arrivée.

En supposant, Monsieur le Chevalier, que le fier Rodrique vous rencontre et que vous jugiez à propos de vous rendre en droiture à Sandy Hook, il est un moyen de faire que les dépêches qui vous attendent à Rhode Island et du Cap Henry vous parviennent aussi promptement qui si vous aviez atterri à l'un de ces deux points: ce serait de dépêcher, vers l'un ou l'autre, l'un de vos plus legers vaisseaux qui recevrait à son bord l'officier chargé de ces dépêches, et vous irait rejoindre vers Sandy Hook, où vraisemblablement il se rendrait aussitôt que votre flotte, ou du moins beaucoup plustôt que les réponses de Général Washington ou de Monsieur le Marquis de Lafayette, aux lettres qui leur annonceraient votre arrivée.

Si le Cap Henry etait le point choisi, j'oserais vous prier, Monsieur le Chevalier, afin d'éviter tous délais, d'ordonner qu' à la vue, du signal que vous savez, le vaisseau y réponde par un signal contraire, je veux dire en avertissant la position des pavillons: qu'il envoie sa chaloupe à terre avec un officier muni des mots de reconnaissance; que cet officier me donne la première partie de ces mots et reçoive de moi la seconde. Par là je crois, Monsieur le Chevalier, que toute possibilité de surprise est sauvée, de part et d'autre, sans qu'il y ait un seul instant de perdre par le cérémonial de la reconnaissance.

TO BARON STEUBEN.

WHIPPANY, June 25, 1780.

DEAR BARON:

The enemy, the day before yesterday, made a forward movement to Springfield, which they burnt, and retired to Elizabethtown Point. The same evening they crossed over to Staten Island, and there are a great many concurring circumstances which make it probable we shall next hear of them on the North River. As you are at West Point the

General wishes you to remain there until the present appearances come to some result. He has confidence in your judgment, and wishes you to give your advice and assistance to the commanding officer. As you have no command in the post you can only do this in a private, friendly way; but I dare say General Howe will be happy to consult you. You will consider this as a private letter, in which I rather convey you the General's wishes than his commands.

All the army is in march toward you, and will be at Pompton this evening.

TO BARON STEUBEN.

HEADQUARTERS, RAMAPO, June 30, 1780.

Agreeably to your request, my dear Baron, I communicated your project to the General. Happily the inactivity of the enemy has given us time to make dispositions which render the calling out of the militia unnecessary, and the whole has been accordingly countermanded.

The General requests that when you have completed the object of your errand in your department, and put things in train, you will rejoin the army,

I wrote you a line from Whippany, of which you made no mention.

TO GENERAL ANTHONY WAYNE.

July 6, 1780.

DEAR GENERAL:

Doctor W. Mendy is one of those characters that for its honesty, simplicity, and helplessness interests my humanity. He is exceedingly anxious to be in the service, and, I believe, has been forced out of it not altogether by fair play. He is just what I should like for a military parson, except that he does not drink. He will fight, and he will not insist upon your going to heaven whether you will or not. He tells me there is a vacancy in your brigade. I should be really

happy if, through your influence, he can fill it. Pray take care of the good old man.*

TO BARON STEUBEN.

HEADQUARTERS, July 23, 1780.

I have received, my dear Baron, your two letters of the sixteenth and eighteenth. On the formation of the light infantry, the General has already written to you. I presume it will be, ultimately, nearly as you have proposed.

Smith set out some days since to join you. Bradford, I am told, is undecided about entering into the office. Col. Scammel has promised to bring him to me, and if he accepts, we will forward him. I believe Prescott will be appointed in the light infantry. *Entre nous*, 't is not easy to find good majors for this corps in the Massachusetts Line, and as it will act a good deal with the French troops, we wish it (for this additional reason) to be well officered. Prescott will answer the purpose: but he is not yet to know that he is in contemplation. We shall not long continue in our present position. The distinctions of departments are an old story, which now do not exist except with respect to South Carolina. You are with a detachment of the main army.

I dare say all you are doing will be found right. I shall join my *beau-père* to save you from the cord. The arrangement for your department was unfortunately sent to Congress soon after you went from here, with the most pressing instances to determine upon it without delay. We have heard nothing of it since. We have repeated our *prayers* and *exhortations*. If we get no answer in three or four days, we must determine for ourselves.

Major Francis is returned from Philadelphia, but I have not seen him since the arrival of your letters. I will move the inquiry you wish when I see him. Can you do any thing for him in your department?

* Now first printed from the original in the Wayne MSS. I owe this letter to the kindness of the Hon. George Bancroft.

A severe stroke upon us is, that our arms expected from France are not arrived. I do not know how we shall be able to arm our recruits.

Graves sailed from the Hook the nineteenth. We had been playing off and on two days.

TO MISS SCHUYLER.*

September 6, 1780.

Most people here are groaning under a very disagreeable piece of intelligence just come from the southward, that Gates has had a total defeat near Camden, in South Carolina. Cornwallis and he met in the night of the fifteenth, by accident, marching to the same point. The advanced guards skirmished, and the two armies halted and formed till morning. In the morning a battle ensued, in which the militia, and Gates with them, immediately ran away, and left the Continental troops to contend with the enemy's whole force.

They did it obstinately, and probably are most of them cut off. Gates, however, who writes to Congress, seems to know very little what has become of his army. He showed that age and the long labors and fatigues of a military life had not in the least impaired his activity, for in three days and a half he reached Hillsborough, one hundred and eighty miles from the scene of action, leaving all his troops to take care of themselves, and get out of the scrape as well as they could.

He has confirmed, in this instance, the opinion I always had of him. This event will have very serious consequences to the southward. People's imaginations have already given up North Carolina and Virginia; but I do not believe either of them will fall. I am certain Virginia cannot. This misfortune affects me less than others, because it is not in my temper to repine at evils that are past, but to endeavor to draw good out of them, and because I think our safety

* Miss Elizabeth Schuyler, whom Hamilton met first at Albany on his mission to Gates in 1777. She was the daughter of General Philip Schuyler. At the time of this letter she and Hamilton were engaged and they were married Dec. 14, 1780.

depends on a total change of system, and this change of system will only be produced by misfortune.

TO JAMES DUANE.

September 6, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR:

The letter accompanying this has lain by two or three days for want of an opportunity. I have heard since of Gates' defeat: a very good comment on the necessity of changing our system. His passion for militia, I fancy, will be a little cured, and he will cease to think them the best bulwark of American liberty. What think you of the conduct of this great man? I am his enemy personally, for unjust and unprovoked attacks upon my character; therefore what I say of him ought to be received as from an enemy, and have no more weight than as it is consistent with fact and common sense. But did ever any one hear of such a disposition or such a flight? His best troops placed on the side strongest by nature, his worst on that weakest by nature, and his attack made with these. 'T is impossible to give a more complete picture of military absurdity. It is equally against the maxims of war and common sense. We see the consequences. His left ran away, and left his right uncovered. His right wing turned on the left has in all probability been cut off. Though, in truth, the General seems to have known very little what became of his army.

Had he placed his militia on his right, supported by the morass, and his Continental troops on his left, where it seems he was most vulnerable, his right would have been more secure, and his left would have opposed the enemy; and instead of going backward when he ordered to attack, would have gone forward. The reverse of what has happened might have happened.

But was there ever an instance of a general running away, as Gates has done, from his whole army? And was there ever so precipitate a flight? One hundred and eighty miles in three days and a half. It does admirable credit to the activity of a man at his time of life. But it disgraces the

general and the soldier. I always believed him to be very far short of a Hector, or a Ulysses. All the world, I think, will begin to agree with me.

But what will be done by Congress? Will he be changed or not? If he is changed, for God's sake overcome prejudice, and send Greene. You know my opinion of him. I stake my reputation on the events, give him but fair play.

But, above all things, let us have, without delay, a vigorous government, and a well constituted army for the war.

TO WASHINGTON.

VERPLANCK'S POINT, Sept. 25, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

You will see by the enclosed that we are too late. Arnold went by water to the Vulture. I shall write to General Greene, advising him, without making a bustle, to be in readiness to march, and even to detach a brigade this way; for, though I do not believe the project will go on, yet it is possible Arnold has made such dispositions with the garrison as may tempt the enemy, in its present weakness, to make the stroke this night, and it seems prudent to be providing against it. I shall endeavor to find Meigs, and request him to march to the garrison, and shall make some arrangements here. I hope your Excellency will approve these steps, as there may be no time to be lost. The Vulture is gone down to New York.*

TO GENERAL GREENE.

VERPLANCK'S POINT, 25th Sept., 1780.

DEAR SIR:

There has just been unfolded at this place a scene of the blackest treason. Arnold has fled to the enemy—André,

* This letter is reprinted from the "Writings of Washington," vii., 215. It is also given without date in the "History of the Republic," ii., 55. Hamilton had been sent, as soon as Arnold's escape was known, to Verplanck's Point to try to intercept him, and this letter was written on his arrival, which he found was too late, for the bird had flown and was safe on board the Vulture, an English sloop-of-war.

the British Adjutant-General, is in our possession as a spy. His capture unravelled the mystery.

West Point was to have been the sacrifice. All the dispositions have been made for the purpose, and 't is possible, though not probable, we may still see the execution. The wind is fair. I came here in pursuit of Arnold, but was too late. I advise your putting the army under marching orders and detaching a brigade immediately this way.

TO MISS SCHUYLER.

September 25, 1780.

Arnold, hearing of the plot being detected, immediately fled to the enemy. I went in pursuit of him, but was much too late; and could hardly regret the disappointment, when, on my return, I saw an amiable woman, frantic with distress for the loss of a husband she tenderly loved; a traitor to his country and to his fame; a disgrace to his connections: it was the most affecting scene I ever was witness to. She, for a considerable time, entirely lost herself. The General went up to see her, and she upraided him with being in a plot to murder her child. One moment she raved, another she melted into tears. Sometimes she pressed her infant to her bosom, and lamented its fate, occasioned by the imprudence of its father, in a manner that would have pierced insensibility itself. All the sweetness of beauty, all the loveliness of innocence, all the tenderness of a wife, and all the fondness of a mother showed themselves in her appearance and conduct. We have every reason to believe that she was entirely unacquainted with the plan, and that the first knowledge of it was when Arnold went to tell her he must banish himself from his country and from her forever. She instantly fell into a convulsion, and he left her in that situation.

This morning she is more composed. I paid her a visit, and endeavored to soothe her by every method in my power, though you may imagine she is not easily to be consoled. Added to her other distresses, she is very apprehensive the

resentment of her country will fall upon her (who is only unfortunate) for the guilt of her husband.

I have tried to persuade her that her fears are ill-founded, but she will not be convinced. She received us in bed, with every circumstance that would interest our sympathy; and her sufferings were so eloquent, that I wished myself her brother, to have a right to become her defender. As it is, I have entreated her to enable me to give her proofs of my friendship. Could I forgive Arnold for sacrificing his honor, reputation, and duty, I could not forgive him for acting a part that must have forfeited the esteem of so fine a woman. At present she almost forgets his crime in his misfortunes; and her horror at the guilt of the traitor is lost in her love of the man. But a virtuous mind cannot long esteem a base one; and time will make her despise if it cannot make her hate.

TO MISS SCHUYLER.

Tappan, Oct. 2, 1780.

Poor André suffers to-day. Every thing that is amiable in virtue, in fortitude, in delicate sentiment, and accomplished manners, pleads for him; but hard-hearted policy calls for a sacrifice. He must die ——. I send you my account of Arnold's affair; and to justify myself to your sentiments, I must inform you that I urged a compliance with André's request to be shot; and I do not think it would have had an ill effect; but some people are only sensible to motives of policy, and sometimes, from a narrow disposition, mistake it.

When André's tale comes to be told, and present resentment is over, the refusing him the privilege of choosing the manner of his death will be branded with too much obstinacy.

It was proposed to me to suggest to him the idea of an exchange for Arnold; but I knew I should have forfeited his esteem by doing it, and therefore declined it. As a man

of honor, he could not but reject it, and I would not for the world have proposed to him a thing which must have placed me in the unamiable light of supposing him capable of meanness, or of not feeling myself the impropriety of the measure. I confess to you I had the weakness to value the esteem of a dying man, because I reverenced his merit.

TO JOHN LAURENS.*

October, 1780.

Since my return from Hartford, my dear Laurens, my mind has been too little at ease to permit me to write to you sooner. It has been wholly occupied by the affecting and tragic consequences of Arnold's treason. My feelings were never put to so severe a trial. You will no doubt have heard the principal facts before this reaches you. But there are particulars, to which my situation gave me access, that cannot have come to your knowledge from public report, which I am persuaded you will find interesting.

From several circumstances, the project seems to have originated with Arnold himself, and to have been long premeditated. The first overture is traced back to some time in June last. It was conveyed in a letter to Colonel Robinson, the substance of which was that the ingratitude he had experienced from his country, concurring with other causes, had entirely changed his principles; that he now only sought to restore himself to the favor of his king by some signal proof of his repentance, and would be happy to open a correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton for that purpose. About this period he made a journey to Connecticut, on his return from which to Philadelphia, he solicited the command of West Point, alleging that the effects of his wounds had disqualified him for the active duties of the field. The sac-

* This letter is the best description extant of Arnold's treason, and all the accompanying incidents. It is admirably written, and shows, in a striking way, Hamilton's literary skill. In the edition of 1850 it is dated September, which is an obvious error, as André was not executed until October 2d, and this letter describes his execution.

rifice of this important post was the atonement he intended to make. General Washington hesitated the less to gratify an officer who had rendered such eminent services, as he was convinced the post might be safely intrusted to one who had given so many distinguished specimens of his bravery. In the beginning of August he joined the army, and renewed his application. The enemy, at this juncture, had embarked the greatest part of their forces on an expedition to Rhode Island, and our army was in motion to compel them to relinquish the enterprise, or to attack New York in its weakened state. The General offered Arnold the left wing of the army, which he declined, on the pretext already mentioned, but not without visible embarrassment. He certainly might have executed the duties of such a temporary command, and it was expected, from his enterprising temper, that he would gladly have embraced so splendid an opportunity. But he did not choose to be diverted a moment from his favorite object, probably from an apprehension that some different disposition might have taken place, which would have excluded him. The extreme solicitude he discovered to get possession of the post would have led to a suspicion of treachery, had it been possible from his past conduct to have supposed him capable of it.

The correspondence thus begun was carried on between Arnold and Major André, Adjutant-General to the British army, in behalf of Sir Henry Clinton, under feigned signatures, and in a mercantile disguise. In an intercepted letter of Arnold's, which lately fell into our hands, he proposes an interview, "to settle the risks and profits of the copartnership," and, in the same style of metaphor, intimates an expected augmentation of the garrison, and speaks of it as the means of extending their traffic. It appears, by another letter, that André was to have met him on the lines, under the sanction of a flag, in the character of Mr. John Anderson. But some cause or other not known prevented this interview.

The twentieth of last month, Robinson * and André went up the river in the Vulture, sloop-of-war. Robinson sent a flag to Arnold with two letters: one to General Putnam, inclosed in another to himself, proposing an interview with Putnam, or, in his absence, with Arnold, to adjust some private concerns. The one to General Putnam was evidently meant as a cover to the other, in case, by accident, the letters should have fallen under the inspection of a third person.

General Washington crossed the river on his way to Hartford the day these despatches arrived. Arnold, conceiving he must have heard of the flag, thought it necessary, for the sake of appearances, to submit the letters to him, and ask his opinion of the propriety of complying with the request. The General, with his usual caution, though without the least surmise of the design, dissuaded him from it, and advised him to reply to Robinson that whatever related to his private affairs must be of a civil nature, and could only properly be addressed to the civil authority. This reference fortunately deranged the plan, and was the first link in the chain of events that led to the detection. The interview could no longer take place in the form of a flag, but was obliged to be managed in a secret manner.

Arnold employed one Smith † to go on board the Vulture on the night of the twenty-second, to bring André on shore, with a pass for Mr. John Anderson. André came ashore accordingly, and was conducted within a picket of ours to the house of Smith, where Arnold and he remained together in close conference all that night and the day following. At daylight, in the morning, the commanding officer at King's Ferry, without the privity of Arnold, moved a couple of

* Beverly Robinson, son of John Robinson of Virginia. He married Susanna Phillipse and thus acquired fortune and part of the famous Phillipse estate. He was a strong Tory and colonel of the regiment of Royal Americans in the British service. After the Revolution he fled to England, where he died.

† Joshua H. Smith, who had been employed by General Howe, Arnold's predecessor, to gather intelligence. He had always been thought a loyal man, but Arnold succeeded in corrupting him.

pieces of cannon to a point opposite to where the Vulture lay, and obliged her to take a more remote station. This event, or some lurking distrust, made the boatmen refuse to convey the two passengers back, and disconcerted Arnold so much that, by one of those strokes of infatuation which often confound the schemes of men conscious of guilt, he insisted on André's exchanging his uniform for a disguise, and returning in a mode different from that in which he came. André, who had been undesignedly brought within our posts in the first instance, remonstrated warmly against this new and dangerous expedient. But Arnold persisting in declaring it impossible for him to return as he came, he at length reluctantly yielded to his direction, and consented to change his dress and take the route he recommended. Smith furnished the disguise, and in the evening passed King's Ferry with him and proceeded to Crompond,* where they stopped the remainder of the night, at the instance of a militia officer,† to avoid being suspected by him. The next morning they resumed their journey, Smith accompanying André a little beyond Pine's Bridge, where he left him. He had reached Tarrytown, when he was taken up by three militiamen,‡ who rushed out of the woods and seized his horse.

At this critical moment his presence of mind forsook him. Instead of producing his pass, which would have extricated him from our parties, and could have done him no harm with his own, he asked the militiamen if they were of the *upper* or *lower* party; descriptive appellations known among the enemy's refugee corps. The militiamen replied they were of the lower party, upon which he told them he was a British officer, and pressed them not to detain him, as he was upon urgent business. This confession removed all doubts, and it was in vain he afterwards produced his pass. He was instantly forced off to a place of greater security, where, after a careful search, there were found concealed in the feet of

* A place about eight miles from Verplanck's Point.

† Captain Boyd.

‡ Paulding, Van Wart, and Williams.

his stockings several papers of importance, delivered to him by Arnold! Among these were a plan of the fortifications of West Point; a memorial from the engineer on the attack and defence of the place; returns of the garrison, cannon, and stores; copy of the minutes of a council of war held by General Washington a few weeks before. The prisoner at first was inadvertently ordered to Arnold, but on recollection, while still on the way, he was countermanded and sent to Old Salem. The papers were inclosed in a letter to General Washington, which, having taken a route different from that by which he returned, made a circuit that afforded leisure for another letter, through an ill-judged delicacy, written to Arnold with information of Anderson's capture, to get to him an hour before General Washington arrived at his quarters; time enough to elude the fate that awaited him. He went down the river in his barge to the Vulture with such precipitate confusion that he did not take with him a single paper useful to the enemy. On the first notice of the affair he was pursued, but much too late to be overtaken.

There was some color for imagining it was a part of the plan to betray the General into the hands of the enemy. Arnold was very anxious to ascertain from him the precise day of his return, and the enemy's movements seem to have corresponded to this point. But if it was really the case it was very injudicious. The success must have depended on surprise, and as the officers at the advanced posts were not in the secret their measures might have given the alarm, and General Washington, taking the command of the post, might have rendered the whole scheme abortive. Arnold, it is true, had so dispersed the garrison as to have made a defence difficult but not impracticable; and the acquisition of West Point was of such magnitude to the enemy that it would have been unwise to connect it with any other object, however great, which might make the obtaining of it precarious.

Arnold, a moment before the setting out, went into Mrs. Arnold's apartment, and informed her that some transactions had just come to light which must forever banish him from

his country. She fell into a swoon at this declaration: and he left her in it to consult his own safety, till the servants, alarmed by her cries, came to her relief. She remained frantic all day, accusing every one who approached her with an intention to murder her child (an infant in her arms), and exhibiting every other mark of the most genuine and agonizing distress. Exhausted by the fatigue and tumult of her spirits, her phrensy subsided towards evening, and she sank into all the sadness of affliction. It was impossible not to have been touched with her situation. Every thing affecting in female tears, or in the misfortunes of beauty; every thing pathetic in the wounded tenderness of a wife, or in the apprehensive fondness of a mother; and, till I have reason to change the opinion, I will add, every thing amiable in suffering innocence,* conspired to make her an object of sympathy to all who were present. She experienced the most delicate attentions and every friendly office, till her departure for Philadelphia.

André was, without loss of time, conducted to the headquarters of the army, where he was immediately brought before a Board of General Officers, to prevent all possibility of misrepresentation, or cavil on the part of the enemy. The Board reported that he ought to be considered as a spy, and, according to the laws of nations, to suffer death, which was executed two days after.

Never, perhaps, did a man suffer death with more justice, or deserve it less. The first step he took after his capture was to write a letter to General Washington, conceived in terms of dignity without insolence, and apology without meanness. The scope of it was to vindicate himself from the imputation of having assumed a mean character for treacherous or interested purposes; asserting that he had been involuntarily an impostor; that contrary to his intention, which was to meet a person for intelligence on neutral ground, he had been betrayed within our posts, and forced

* Mrs. Arnold, as Hamilton supposed, was undoubtedly free from all complicity in her husband's treason.

into the vile condition of an enemy in diguise; soliciting only that, to whatever rigor policy might devote him, a decency of treatment might be observed, due to a person who, though unfortunate, had been guilty of nothing dishonorable. His request was granted in its full extent; for, in the whole progress of the affair, he was treated with the most scrupulous delicacy. When brought before the Board of Officers he met with every mark of indulgence, and was required to answer no interrogatory which could even embarrass his feelings. On his part, while he carefully concealed every thing that might involve others, he frankly confessed all the facts relating to himself; and, upon his confession, without the trouble of examining a witness, the Board made their report. The members of it were not more impressed with the candor and firmness, mixed with a becoming sensibility, which he displayed, than he was penetrated with their liberality and politeness. He acknowleged the generosity of the behavior towards him in every respect, but particularly in this, in the strongest terms of manly gratitude. In a conversation with a gentleman who visited him after his trial, he said he flattered himself he had never been illiberal; but if there were any remains of prejudice in his mind, his present experience must obliterate them.

In one of the visits I made to him (and I saw him several times during his confinement), he begged me to be the bearer of a request to the General, for permission to send an open letter to Sir Henry Clinton. "I foresee my fate," said he, "and though I pretend not to play the hero, or to be indifferent about life, yet I am reconciled to whatever may happen, conscious that misfortune, not guilt, has brought it upon me. There is only one thing that disturbs my tranquillity. Sir Henry Clinton has been too good to me; he has been lavish of his kindness. I am bound to him by too many obligations, and love him too well, to bear the thought that he should reproach himself, or that others should reproach him, on the supposition of my having con-

ceived myself obliged, by his instructions, to run the risk I did. I would not for the world leave a sting in his mind that should imbitter his future days." He could scarce finish the sentence, bursting into tears in spite of his efforts to suppress them, and with difficulty collected himself enough afterwards to add, "I wish to be permitted to assure him I did not act under this impression, but submitted to a necessity imposed upon me, as contrary to my own inclination as to his orders." His request was readily complied with, and he wrote the letter annexed, with which I dare say you will be as much pleased as I am, both for the diction and sentiment.

When his sentence was announced to him he remarked that since it was his lot to die, there was still a choice in the mode, which would make a material difference in his feelings, and he would be happy, if possible, to be indulged with a professional death. He made a second application, by letter, in concise but persuasive terms. It was thought this indulgence, being incompatible with the customs of war, could not be granted, and it was therefore determined, in both cases, to evade an answer, to spare him the sensations which a certain knowledge of the intended mode would inflict.

In going to the place of execution, he bowed familiarly as he went along, to all those with whom he had been acquainted in his confinement. A smile of complacency expressed the serene fortitude of his mind. Arrived at the fatal spot, he asked, with some emotion, "Must I then die in this manner?" He was told that it had been unavoidable. "I am reconciled to my fate," said he, "but not to the mode." Soon, however, recollecting himself, he added: "It will be but a momentary pang," and, springing upon the cart, performed the last offices to himself, with a composure that excited the admiration and melted the hearts of the beholders. Upon being told that the final moment was at hand, and asked if he had any thing to say, he answered: "Nothing but to request you will witness to the world

that I die like a brave man." Among the extraordinary circumstances that attended him, in the midst of his enemies, he died universally esteemed and universally regretted.

There was something singularly interesting in the character and fortunes of André. To an excellent understanding, well improved by education and travel, he united a peculiar elegance of mind and manners, and the advantage of a pleasing person. 'T is said he possessed a pretty taste for the fine arts, and had himself attained some proficiency in poetry, music, and painting. His knowledge appeared without ostentation, and embellished by a diffidence that rarely accompanies so many talents and accomplishments: which left you to suppose more than appeared. His sentiments were elevated, and inspired esteem: they had a softness that conciliated affection. His elocution was handsome; his address easy, polite, and insinuating. By his merit he had acquired the unlimited confidence of his general, and was making a rapid progress in military rank and reputation. But in the height of his career, flushed with new hopes from the execution of a project, the most beneficial to his party that could be devised, he was at once precipitated from the summit of prosperity, and saw all the expectations of his ambition blasted, and himself ruined.

The character I have given of him, is drawn partly from what I saw of him myself, and partly from information. I am aware that a man of real merit is never seen in so favorable a light as through the medium of adversity: the clouds that surround him are shades that set off his good qualities. Misfortune cuts down the little vanities that, in prosperous times serve as so many spots in his virtues; and gives a tone of humility that makes his worth more amiable. His spectators, who enjoy a happier lot, are less prone to detract from it, through envy, and are more disposed, by compassion, to give him the credit he deserves, and perhaps even to magnify it.

I speak not of André's conduct in this affair as a philosopher, but as a man of the world. The authorized maxims and practices of war are the satires of human nature. They countenance almost every species of seduction as well as violence; and the general who can make most traitors in the army of his adversary is frequently most applauded. On this scale we acquit André; while we could not but condemn him, if we were to examine his conduct by the sober rules of philosophy and moral rectitude. It is, however, a blemish on his fame, that he once intended to prostitute a flag: about this, a man of nice honor ought to have had a scruple; but the temptation was great: let his misfortunes cast a veil over his error.

Several letters from Sir Henry Clinton, and others, were received in the course of the affair, feebly attempting to prove that André came out under the protection of a flag, with a passport from a general officer in active service; and consequently could not be justly detained. Clinton sent a deputation, composed of Lieutenant-General Robinson, Mr. Elliot, and Mr. William Smith, to represent, as he said, the true state of Major André's case. General Greene met Robinson, and had a conversation with him, in which he reiterated the pretence of a flag, urged André's release as a personal favor to Sir Henry Clinton, and offered any friend of ours in their power in exchange. Nothing could have been more frivolous than the plea which was used. The fact was, that beside the time, manner, object of the interview, change of dress, and other circumstances, there was not a single formality customary with flags; and the passport was not to Major André, but to Mr. Anderson. But had there been, on the contrary, all the formalities, it would be an abuse of language to say that the sanction of a flag for corrupting an officer to betray his trust, ought to be respected. So unjustifiable a purpose would not only destroy its validity, but make it an aggravation.

André, himself, has answered the argument, by ridiculing

and exploding the idea, in his examination before the Board of Officers. It was a weakness to urge it.

There was, in truth, no way of saving him. Arnold or he must have been the victim; the former was out of our power.

It was by some suspected Arnold had taken his measures in such a manner, that if the interview had been discovered in the act, it might have been in his power to sacrifice André to his own security. This surmise of double treachery made them imagine Clinton might be induced to give up Arnold for André; and a gentleman took occasion to suggest this expedient to the latter as a thing that might be proposed by him. He declined it. The moment he had been capable of so much frailty, I should have ceased to esteem him.

The infamy of Arnold's conduct previous to his desertion is only equalled by his baseness since. Beside the folly of writing to Sir Henry Clinton, assuring him that André had acted under a passport from him, and according to his directions while commanding officer at a post, and that, therefore, he did not doubt he would be immediately sent in, he had the effrontery to write to General Washington in the same spirit, with the addition of a menace of retaliation, if the sentence should be carried into execution. He has since acted the farce of sending in his resignation. This man is, in every sense, despicable. Added to the scene of knavery and prostitution during his command in Philadelphia, which the late seizure of his papers has unfolded, the history of his command at West Point is a history of little, as well as great, villainies. He practised every dirty art of peculation, and even stooped to connections with the sutlers of the garrison to defraud the public.

To his conduct, that of the captors of André forms a striking contrast. He tempted them with the offer of his watch, his horse, and any sum of money they should name. They rejected his offers with indignation, and the gold that could seduce a man high in the esteem and confidence of his country, who had the remembrance of past exploits, the motives of present reputation and future glory, to prop his

integrity, had no charms for three simple peasants, leaning only on their virtue and an honest sense of their duty. While Arnold is handed down with execration to future times, posterity will repeat with reverence the names of Van Wart, Paulding, and Williams.

I congratulate you, my friend, on our happy escape from the mischiefs with which this treason was big. It is a new comment on the value of an honest man, and, if it were possible, would endear you to me more than ever.

TO ISAAC SEARS.*

BOSTON, October 12, 1780.

I was much obliged to you, my dear sir, for the letter which you did me the favor to write me since your return to Boston. I am sorry to find that the same spirit of indifference to public affairs prevails. It is necessary we should rouse and begin to do our business in earnest, or we shall play a losing game. It is impossible the contest can be much longer supported on the present footing. We must have a government with more power. We must have a tax in kind. We must have a foreign loan. We must have a bank—on the true principles of a bank. We must have an administration distinct from Congress, and in the hands of single men under their orders. We must, above all things, have an army for the war, and an establishment that will interest the officers in the service.

Congress are deliberating on our military affairs; but I apprehend their resolutions will be tinctured with the old spirit. We seem to be proof against experience. They will, however, recommend an army for the war, at least, as a primary object. All those who love their country ought to exert their influence in the States where they reside, to determine them to take up this object with energy. The States must sink under the burden of temporary enlistments; and the

* Isaac Sears was one of the early patriot leaders in New York, but never rose into distinction afterwards.

enemy will conquer us by degrees during the intervals of our weakness.

Clinton is now said to be making a considerable detachment to the southward. My fears are high, my hopes low. We are told here there is to be a congress of the neutral powers at the Hague, for mediating of peace. God send it may be true. We want it; but if the idea goes abroad, ten to one if we do not fancy the thing done, and fall into a profound sleep till the cannon of the enemy awaken us next campaign. This is our national character.

TO JAMES DUANE.

October 18, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR:

Since my last to you, I have had the pleasure of receiving two letters from you. I am sorry to find we do not seem to agree in the proper remedies to our disorder, at least in the practicability of applying those which are proper. Convinced, as I am, of the absolute insufficiency of our present system to our safety, if I do not despair of the republic, it is more the effect of constitution than of judgment.

With the sentiments I entertain of Gates, I cannot but take pleasure in his removal; and with the confidence I have in Greene, I expect much from his being the successor; at least, I expect all his circumstances will permit. You seem to have mistaken me on the subject of this gentleman. When I spoke of prejudice, I did not suppose it to exist with you, but with Congress as a body—at least with a great part of them. The part they have taken in the affair, in my opinion, does honor to their impartiality. I hope they will support the officer appointed with a liberal confidence; his situation, surrounded with difficulties, will need support. Of your influence for this purpose, I am too thoroughly persuaded of your patriotism, my dear sir, to doubt.

Be assured, my dear sir, the marks of your regard give me a sincere pleasure, and I shall be always happy to cultivate it, and to give you proofs of my affectionate attachment.

TO WASHINGTON.

November 22, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

Some time last fall, when I spoke to your Excellency about going to the southward, I explained to you candidly my feelings with respect to military reputation, and how much it was my object to act a conspicuous part in some enterprise that might perhaps raise my character as a soldier above mediocrity. You were so good as to say you would be glad to furnish me with an occasion. When the expedition to Staten Island was afoot, a favorable one seemed to offer. There was a battalion without a field officer, the command of which, I thought, as it was accidental, might be given to me without inconvenience. I made an application for it through the Marquis,* who informed me of your refusal on two principles—one, that the giving me a whole battalion might be a subject of dissatisfaction; the other, that if any accident should happen to me, in the present state of your family, you would be embarrassed for the necessary assistance.

The project you now have in contemplation affords another opportunity. I have a variety of reasons that press me to desire ardently to have it in my power to improve it. I take the liberty to observe that the command may now be proportioned to my rank, and that the second objection ceases to operate, as, during the period of establishing our winter-quarters, there will be a suspension of material business; besides which, my peculiar position will, in any case, call me away from the army in a few days, and Mr. Harrison may be expected back early next month. My command may consist of one hundred and fifty or two hundred men, composed of fifty men of Major Gibbes' corps, fifty from Col. Meigs' regiment, and fifty or a hundred more from the light infantry; Major Gibbes to be my major. The hundred men from here may move on Friday morning towards ———, which will strengthen the appearances

* Lafayette.

for Staten Island, to form a junction on the other side of the Passaic.

I suggest this mode to avoid the complaints that might arise from composing my party wholly of the light infantry, which might give umbrage to the officers of that corps, who, on this plan, can have no just subject for it.

The primary idea may be, if circumstances permit, to attempt with my detachment Bayard's Hill. Should we arrive early enough to undertake it, I should prefer it to any thing else, both for the brilliancy of the attempt in itself and the decisive consequences of which its success would be productive. If we arrive too late to make this eligible (as there is reason to apprehend), my corps may form the van of one of the other attacks; and Bayard's Hill will be a pretext for my being employed in the affair, on a supposition of my knowing the ground, which is partly true. I flatter myself, also, that my military character stands so well in the army as to reconcile the officers in general to the measure. All circumstances considered, I venture to say any exceptions which might be taken would be unreasonable.

I take this method of making the request to avoid the embarrassment of a personal explanation. I shall only add that, however much I have the matter at heart, I wish your Excellency entirely to consult your own inclination, and not, from a disposition to oblige me, to do any thing that may be disagreeable to you. It will, nevertheless, make me singularly happy if your wishes correspond with mine.

TO WASHINGTON.

ALBANY, Dec. 9, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Rensselaer, who has the direction of the armory here, tells me that the Board of War write him they are unable to support it any longer on the present establishment for want of supplies, and propose to him to endeavor to have it carried on by contract. This he declares is impossible. The armory must either continue on the present footing, or

cease. As far as I understand the matter, there is no objection to the terms in themselves, but a want of means to comply with them. If there is a want of means, the thing must be relinquished; but, as it does not strike me that it can be more difficult to maintain an armory here than elsewhere, and as I apprehend, in the present state of arsenals, we shall stand in need of all the repairing we can do, I take the liberty, at Mr. Rensselaer's request, to mention the matter to you. I have seen the armory myself. It appears to be in excellent order, and under a very ingenious and industrious man. I am told it has been conducted hitherto with great activity. Its situation is, in my opinion, advantageous. As there is a considerable body of troops always at West Point, and the army generally in its vicinity, the river is very convenient for transportation to and from the armory, and I should think would be conducive to economy. This consideration strikes me as of importance. General Knox, however, will be the best judge of the usefulness of this armory.

Mr. Rensselaer also mentions a considerable number of hides in the hands of persons here who had had orders from the clothier-general not to dispose of them but by his order. He says he can no longer but with great difficulty procure leather for the public works on credit, and has requested me to mention this also to your Excellency.

Mrs. Hamilton presents her respectful compliments to Mrs. Washington and yourself. After the holidays, we shall be at headquarters.

I believe I imparted to you General Schuyler's wish that you could make it convenient to pay a visit with Mrs. Washington this winter. He and Mrs. Schuyler have several times repeated their inquiries and wishes. I have told them I was afraid your business would not permit you; if it should, I shall be happy. You will enable me to let them know about what period it will suit. When the sleighing arrives, it will be an affair of two days up and two days down.

TO ———.

HEADQUARTERS, Feb. 7, 1781.

DEAR SIR:

The first step to reformation, as well in an administration as in an individual, is to be sensible of our faults. This begins to be our case, and there are several symptoms that please me at this juncture. But we are so accustomed to doing right by halves, and spoiling a good intention in the execution, that I always wait to see the end of our public arrangements before I venture to expect good or evil from them. The plan of executive ministers is undoubtedly a good one, and by some men has been fruitlessly insisted upon for three or four years back; but whether it will work a present good or evil must depend on the choice of the persons. This is a bad omen. I am not at all informed of the persons in nomination.

The accession of Maryland to the Confederacy will be a happy event if it does not make people believe that the Confederacy gives Congress power enough and prevent their acquiring more. If it has this effect it will be an evil, for it is unequal to the exigencies of the war or to the preservation of the Union hereafter. The cession of territory by Virginia ought to have an important influence. New York is about to make a similar cession. It is now before the Legislature and will probably be adopted.

The late disturbances in the army and disquietudes in the State of New York, which are with difficulty diverted, show that the republic is sick and wants powerful remedies. God send that the negotiation abroad for money may succeed, for it is only this that can give success to our interior efforts.

Paper credit cannot be supported without pecuniary funds. Back lands are a very good resource in reserve, but I suspect they will not have so much present efficacy as is imagined. I only regard the acquisition of territory to Congress as useful so far as it enables them to procure credit.

The Eastern States are really making great exertions towards the next campaign.

Have the goodness to assure the Chevalier De la Luzerne of my sincere respect and attachment, and do justice to the sentiments for you personally with which I have the honor to be, etc.*

TO PHILIP SCHUYLER.†

HEADQUARTERS, NEW WINDSOR, February 18, 1781.

MY DEAR SIR:

Since I had the pleasure of writing you last, an unexpected change has taken place in my situation. I am no longer a member of the General's family. This information will surprise you, and the manner of the change will surprise you more. Two days ago, the General and I passed each other on the stairs. He told me he wanted to speak to me. I answered that I would wait upon him immediately. I went below, and delivered Mr. Tilghman a letter to be sent to the commissary, containing an order of a pressing and interesting nature.

Returning to the General, I was stopped on the way by the Marquis de Lafayette, and we conversed together about a minute on a matter of business. He can testify how im-

* This letter is now first printed from the mutilated original in the possession of a gentleman in New York, to whose kindness I am indebted for the opportunity to publish it. I am unable to give the name of my kind correspondent, as his note, which accompanied the copy of the letter, has been unfortunately lost—a circumstance which I cannot sufficiently regret.

† This famous letter to Hamilton's father-in-law, General Schuyler, is now printed entire. It would have been perfectly justifiable to have destroyed or suppressed this letter altogether, for it was written by Hamilton when he was very angry, and had lost control of himself, so that the opinions here expressed do not in the least represent his real feeling about Washington, for whom he had the deepest reverence and affection, either at this or any other time. As Mr. J. C. Hamilton, however, saw fit to publish the letter, he should not have suppressed part; he should have given all or nothing. It is given here in its entirety from a copy of the original, made by Mr. James A. Hamilton, and which I found among the papers of my grandfather, Mr. Henry Cabot. The additional paragraphs now published for the first time are enclosed in brackets.

patient I was to get back, and that I left him in a manner which, but for our intimacy, would have been more than abrupt. Instead of finding the General, as is usual, in his room, I met him at the head of the stairs, where, accosting me in an angry tone, "Colonel Hamilton," said he, "you have kept me waiting at the head of the stairs these ten minutes. I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect." I replied, without petulancy, but with decision: "I am not conscious of it, sir; but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part." "Very well, sir," said he, "if it be your choice," or something to this effect, and we separated. I sincerely believe my absence, which gave so much umbrage, did not last two minutes.

In less than an hour after, Tilghman * came to me in the General's name, assuring me of his great confidence in my abilities, integrity, usefulness, etc., and of his desire, in a candid conversation, to heal a difference which could not have happened but in a moment of passion. I requested Mr. Tilghman to tell him—1st. That I had taken my resolution in a manner not to be revoked. 2d. That, as a conversation could serve no other purpose than to produce explanations, mutually disagreeable, though I certainly would not refuse an interview if he desired it, yet I would be happy if he would permit me to decline it. 3d. That, though determined to leave the family, the same principles which had kept me so long in it would continue to direct my conduct towards him when out of it. 4th. That, however, I did not wish to distress him, or the public business, by quitting him before he could derive other assistance by the return of some of the gentlemen who were absent. 5th. And that, in the mean time, it depended on him to let our behavior to each other be the same as if nothing had happened. He consented to decline the conversation, and thanked me for my offer of continuing my aid in the manner I had mentioned. [Thus we stand. I wait Mr. Humphrey's return from the east-

* Lt.-Colonel Tench Tilghman, of Washington's staff.

ward, and may be induced to wait the return of Mr. Harrison from Virginia.]

I have given you so particular a detail of our difference from the desire I have to justify myself in your opinion. Perhaps you may think I was precipitate in rejecting the overture made by the General to an accommodation. I assure you, my dear sir, it was not the effect of resentment; it was the deliberate result of maxims I had long formed for the government of my own conduct.

I always disliked the office of an aid-de-camp as having in it a kind of personal dependence. I refused to serve in this capacity with two major-generals at an early period of the war. Infected, however, with the enthusiasm of the times, an idea of the General's character [which experience taught me to be unfounded] overcame my scruples, and induced me to *accept his invitation* to enter into his family. [It was not long before I discovered he was neither remarkable for delicacy nor good temper, which revived my former aversion to the station in which I was acting, and it has been increasing ever since.] It has been often with great difficulty that I have prevailed upon myself not to renounce it; but while, from motives of public utility, I was doing violence to my feelings, I was always determined, if there should ever happen a breach between us, never to consent to an accommodation. I was persuaded that when once that nice barrier, which marked the boundaries of what we owed to each other, should be thrown down, it might be propped again, but could never be restored.

[I resolved, whenever it should happen, not to be in the wrong. I was convinced the concessions the General might make would be dictated by his interest, and that his self-love would never forgive me for what it would regard as a humiliation.

I believe you know the place I held in the General's confidence and counsels, which will make it the more extraordinary to you to learn that for three years past I have felt no

friendship for him and have professed none. The truth is, our dispositions are the opposites of each other, and the pride of my temper would not suffer me to profess what I did not feel. Indeed, when advances of this kind have been made to me on his part, they were received in a manner that showed at least that I had no desire to court them, and that I desired to stand rather upon a footing of military confidence than of private attachment.

You are too good a judge of human nature not to be sensible how this conduct in me must have operated on a man to whom all the world is offering incense. With this key you will easily unlock the present mystery.

At the end of the war I may say many things to you concerning which I shall impose upon myself till then an inviolable silence.]

The General is a very honest man. His competitors have slender abilities, and less integrity. His popularity has often been essential to the safety of America, and is still of great importance to it. These considerations have influenced my past conduct respecting him, and will influence my future. I think it is necssary he should be supported.

His estimation in your mind, whatever may be its amount, I am persuaded has been formed on principles which a circumstance like this cannot materially affect; but if I thought it could diminish your friendship for him, I should almost forego the motives that urge me to justify myself to you. I wish what I have said to make no other impression than to satisfy you I have not been in the wrong. It is also said in confidence, as a public knowledge of the breach would, in many ways, have an ill effect. It will probably be the policy of both sides to conceal it, and cover the separation with some plausible pretext. I am importuned by such of my friends as are privy to the affair, to listen to a reconciliation; but my resolution is unalterable.

As I cannot think of quitting the army during the war, I have a project of re-entering into the artillery, by taking Lieutenant-Colonel Forrest's place, who is desirous of retir-

ing on half-pay. I have not, however, made up my mind upon this head, as I should be obliged to come in the youngest Lieutenant-Colonel instead of the eldest, which I ought to have been by natural succession, had I remained in the corps; and, at the same time, to resume studies relative to the profession, which, to avoid inferiority, must be laborious.

If a handsome command in the campaign in the light infantry should offer itself, I shall balance between this and the artillery. My situation in the latter would be more solid and permanent: but as I hope the war will not last long enough to make it progressive, this consideration has the less force. A command for the campaign would leave me the winter to prosecute studies relative to my future career in life.* I have written to you on this subject with all the freedom and confidence to which you have a right, and with an assurance of the interest you take in all that concerns me.

TO GENERAL GREENE.

February, 1781.

DEAR GENERAL:

I acknowledge myself to have been unpardonably delinquent in not having written to you before, but my matrimonial occupations have scarcely left me leisure or inclination for any other. I must now be brief, as the post is just setting out. I shall shortly write you at large. I have not been much in the way of knowing sentiments out of the army, but as far as I am acquainted with them, either in or out, you have great reason to be satisfied. Your conduct in the southern command seems to be universally approved, and your reputation is progressive. How long this will last, the wheel of fortune will have too much in determining. I cannot tell you any thing of our prospects here, because we know little about them ourselves. Hitherto we have received few recruits. I fear this campaign will be a defensive

* There is a break marked here in the edition of 1850, but my copy of the original letter does not indicate any omission.

one on our part. Harrison has left the General to be a chief-justice of Maryland. I am about leaving him to be any thing that fortune may cast up—I mean in the military line. This, my dear General, is not an affair of calculation, but of feeling. You may divine the rest, and I am sure you will keep your divinations to yourself. The enemy have gotten so much in the way of intercepting our mails that I am afraid of seeing whatever I write hung up the week after in *Rivington's Gazette*. This obliges me to be cautious. Adieu. My dear General, let me beg you will believe that whatever change there may be in my situation, there will never be any in my respect, esteem, and affection for you.

P. S.—Let me know if I could find any thing worth my while to do in the southern army. You know I shall hate to be nominally a soldier.*

TO WASHINGTON.

DE PEYSTER'S POINT, April 27, 1781.

SIR:

I imagine your Excellency has been informed that in consequence of the resolution of Congress for granting commissions to aids-de-camp appointed under the former establishment, I have obtained one of lieutenant-colonel in the army of the United States, bearing rank since the 1st of March, 1777.

It is become necessary to me to apply to your Excellency to know in what manner you foresee you will be able to employ me in the ensuing campaign. I am ready to enter into activity whenever you think proper, though I am not anxious to do it till the army takes the field, as before that period I perceive no object.

Unconnected as I am with any regiment, I can have no other command than in a light corps, and I flatter myself my pretensions to this are good.

Your Excellency knows I have been in actual service since

* This letter is reprinted from the "History of the Republic," ii., 187. It has no date except the year, but was evidently written just after the disagreement with Washington, of Feb. 16th, described in the preceding letter.

the beginning of '76. I began in the line, and had I continued there I ought in justice to have been more advanced in rank than I now am. I believe my conduct in the different capacities in which I have acted has appeared to the officers of the army in general such as to merit their confidence and esteem; and I cannot suppose them to be so ungenerous as not to see me with pleasure put into a situation still to exercise the disposition I have always had of being useful to the United States. I mention these things only to show that I do not apprehend the same difficulties can exist in my case (which is peculiar) that have opposed the appointments to commands of some other officers not belonging to what is called the line. Though the light infantry is chiefly formed, yet being detached to the southward, I take it for granted there will be a vanguard by detachment formed for this army.

TO WASHINGTON.

DR PEYSTER'S POINT, May 2, 1781.

SIR:

I am extremely sorry to have embarrassed you by my late application, and that you should think there are insuperable obstacles to a compliance with it. Having renounced my expectations, I have no other inducement for troubling your Excellency with a second letter, than to obviate the appearance of having desired a thing inconsistent with the good of the service, while I was acquainted with the circumstances that made it so.

I was too interested a spectator of what happened in the case of Major M'Pherson, not to have remarked, and not to recollect, all the circumstances. The opposition turned ostensibly on his being a brevet officer, yet having a command in a corps formed entirely from one line; the propriety of his being employed in a detachment from the army at large, so far as I remember, was not disputed. In delicacy to Major M'Pherson, no personal objections were formally made, but in reality they existed and contributed to the discontent. It was thought a peculiar hardship that a gentleman who had for a long time fought against us, and had not taken part

with us till a late period and when our affairs had assumed a more prosperous aspect, should be preferred in one of the most honorary commands of the service. Your Excellency must be convinced that I mention this in no other view than to show the sentiments of the officers at the time and the whole grounds for the opposition. My esteem for Major M'Pherson, and other reasons, make it impossible I can have a different intention.

I know less of the motives of dissatisfaction in the case of Colonel Gimat and Major Galvan; but I have understood that it is founded on their being appointed in the light corps for two successive campaigns.

It would be uncandid in me not to acknowledge that I believe a disposition to exclude brevet officers in general from command has a great share in the opposition in every instance, and that so far it affects my case. But, at the same time, it appears to me this principle alone can never be productive of more than momentary murmurs, where it is not seconded by some plausible pretext. I also am convinced that the Pennsylvania officers, for their own sakes, repented the rash steps they had taken, and, on cool reflection, were happy in an opportunity to relinquish their menaces of quitting a service to which they were attached by habit, inclination, and interest, as well as by patriotism. I believe, too, we shall never have a similar instance in the army unless the practice should be carried to excess. Major Galvan, I am told, will probably be relieved. Colonel Gimat will be then the only brevet officer remaining in command. Your Excellency is the best judge of the proper limits, and there can be no doubt that the rights of particular officers ought to give place to the general good and tranquillity of the service.

I cannot forbear repeating that my case is peculiar and dissimilar to all the former. It is distinguished by the circumstances I have before intimated: my early entrance into the service; my having made the campaign of '76, the most disagreeable of the war, at the head of a company of artillery, and having been entitled in that corps to a rank equal

in degree, more ancient in date, than I now possess; my having made all the subsequent campaigns in the family of the Commander-in-Chief, in a constant course of important and laborious service. These are my pretensions, at this advanced period of the war, to being employed in the only way which my situation admits; and I imagine they would have their weight in the minds of the officers in general. I only urge them a second time as reasons which will not suffer me to view the matter in the same light with your Excellency, or to regard as impracticable my appointment in a light corps, should there be one formed. I entreat that they may be understood in this sense only. I am incapable of wishing to obtain any object by importunity. I assure your Excellency that I am too well persuaded of your candor to attribute your refusal to any other cause than an apprehension of inconveniences that may attend the appointment.

P. S.—I have used the term brevet in the sense your Excellency appears to have understood it in, as signifying, in general, all officers not attached to any established corps. Congress seem, however, to have made a distinction: they only give a kind of warrant to those whom they designate as brevet officers. Mine is a regular commission.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

CAMP NEAR DOBBS FERRY, July 10, 1781.

The day before yesterday I arrived here, but for want of an opportunity could not write any sooner; indeed, I know of none now. Finding, when I came here, that nothing was said on the subject of a command, I wrote the General a letter, and inclosed him my commission. This morning Tilghman came to me in his name, pressed me to retain my commission, with an assurance that he would endeavor, by all means, to give me a command, nearly such as I could have desired in the present circumstances of the army. Though I know you would be happy to hear I had rejected this proposal, it is a pleasure my reputation would not permit me to afford you. I consented to retain my commission, and accept the

command. I quarter, at present, by a very polite and warm invitation, with General Lincoln, and experience from the officers of both armies every mark of esteem. * * *

TO WASHINGTON.

CAMP, August 7, 1781.

SIR:

The other day I applied to Colonel Tilghman for an order for shoes, for the two companies of levies. He thought, on a general principle, it could not be granted; but as from the best of my own recollection, confirmed by inquiry of others, I have reason to believe a distinction was made last campaign in favor of the advanced corps, in the case of Cortland's regiment, I am induced to submit the matter to your Excellency.

Your Excellency is sensible that the service of an advanced corps, must be in general more active than of the line; and that, in a country like this, the article of shoes is indispensable. If the men cannot be supplied, they cannot perform the duty required of them; which will make the service fall heavier upon that part of the corps which is not under the same disability, as well as render a considerable part of it of much less utility. I will not add any personal consideration to those which affect the service; though it certainly cannot be a matter of indifference to me.

The men, I am informed, have, in general, received a bounty of about thirty pounds each, which is spent. The State makes no provision for them; and the fact is, they cannot supply themselves: they must therefore be destitute, if they have not a continental supply.

The distinction last campaign was, if I am not mistaken, that shoes were an article of absolute necessity, and therefore to be allowed, though the articles of clothing were refused.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

August, 1781.

In my last letter I informed you that there was a greater prospect of activity now, than there had been heretofore. I did this to prepare your mind for an event which, I am sure,

will give you pain. I begged your father, at the same time, to intimate to you, by degrees, the probability of its taking place. I used this method to prevent a surprise, which might be too severe to you. A part of the army, my dear girl, is going to Virginia, and I must, of necessity, be separated at a much greater distance from my beloved wife. I cannot announce the fatal necessity, without feeling every thing that a fond husband can feel. I am unhappy; I am unhappy beyond expression. I am unhappy, because I am to be so remote from you; because I am to hear from you less frequently than I am accustomed to do. I am miserable, because I know you will be so; I am wretched at the idea of flying so far from you, without a single hour's interview, to tell you all my pains and all my love. But I cannot ask permission to visit you. It might be thought improper to leave my corps at such a time and upon such an occasion. I must go without seeing you—I must go without embracing you;—alas! I must go. But let no idea, other than of the distance we shall be asunder, disquiet you. Though I said the prospects of activity will be greater, I said it to give your expectations a different turn, and prepare you for something disagreeable. It is ten to one that our views will be disappointed, by Cornwallis retiring to South Carolina by land. At all events, our operations will be over by the latter end of October, and I will fly to my home. Don't mention I am going to Virginia.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

HEAD OF ELK, Sept. 6, 1781.

Yesterday, my lovely wife, I wrote to you, inclosing you a letter in one to your father, to the care of Mr. Morris. To-morrow the post sets out, and to-morrow we embark for Yorktown. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of writing you a few lines. Constantly uppermost in my thoughts and affections, I am happy only when my moments are devoted to some office that respects you. I would give the world to be able to tell you all I feel and all I wish, but consult your own heart and you will know mine. What a world will soon

be between us! To support the idea, all my fortitude is insufficient. What must be the case with you, who have the most female of female hearts? I sink at the perspective of your distress, and I look to heaven to be your guardian and supporter. Circumstances that have just come to my knowledge assure me that our operations will be expeditious, as well as our success certain. Early in November, as I promised you, we shall certainly meet. Cheer yourself with this idea, and with the assurance of never more being separated. Every day confirms me in the intention of renouncing public life and devoting myself wholly to you. Let others waste their time and their tranquillity in a vain pursuit of power and glory; be it my object to be happy in a quiet retreat with my better angel.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

September, 1781.

How chequered is human life! How precarious is happiness! How easily do we often part with it for a shadow! These are the reflections that frequently intrude themselves upon me with a painful application. I am going to do my duty. Our operations will be so conducted as to economize the lives of men. Exert your fortitude and rely upon heaven.*

TO LAFAYETTE.

CAMP BEFORE YORKTOWN, Oct. 15, 1781.

SIR:

I have the honor to render you an account of the corps under my command in your attack of last night upon the redoubt on the left of the enemy's lines.

Agreeably to your orders, we advanced in two columns with unloaded arms: the right, composed of Lieutenant-Colonel Gimat's battalion and my own, commanded by Major Fish; the left, of a detachment commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens, destined to take the enemy in reverse, and intercept their retreat. The column on the right was preceded by a vanguard of twenty men, led by Lieuten-

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," ii., 260.

ant Mansfield, and a detachment of sappers and miners, commanded by Captain Gilliland, for the purpose of removing obstructions.

The redoubt was commanded by Major Campbell, with a detachment of British and German troops, and was completely in a state of defence.

The rapidity and immediate success of the assault are the best comment on the behavior of the troops. Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens distinguished himself by an exact and vigorous execution of his part of the plan, by entering the enemy's work with his corps among the foremost, and making prisoner the commanding officer of the redoubt. Lieutenant-Colonel Gimat's battalion, which formed the van of the right attack, and which fell under my immediate observation, encouraged by the decisive and animated example of their leader, advanced with an ardor and resolution superior to every obstacle. They were well seconded by Major Fish, with the battalion under his command, who, when the front of the column reached the abatis, unlocking his corps to the left, as he had been directed, advanced with such celerity as to arrive in time to participate in the assault.

Lieutenant Mansfield deserves particular commendation for the coolness, firmness, and punctuality with which he conducted the vanguard. Captain Olney, who commanded the first platoon of Gimat's battalion, is entitled to peculiar applause. He led his platoon into the work with exemplary intrepidity, and received two bayonet wounds. Captain Gilliland, with the detachment of sappers and miners, acquitted themselves in a manner that did them great honor.

I do but justice to the several corps when I have the pleasure to assure you there was not an officer nor soldier whose behavior, if it could be particularized, would not have a claim to the warmest approbation. As it would have been attended with delay and loss to wait for the removal of the abatis and palisades, the ardor of the troops was indulged in passing over them.

There was a happy coincidence of movements. The redoubt was in the same moment enveloped and carried in

every part. The enemy are entitled to the acknowledgment of an honorable defence.

Permit me to have the satisfaction of expressing our obligations to Col. Armand, Capt. Legongne, the Chevalier De Fontevieux, and Capt. Bedkin, officers of his corps, who, acting upon this occasion as volunteers, proceeded at the head of the right column, and, entering the redoubt among the first, by their gallant example contributed to the success of the enterprise.

Our killed and wounded you will perceive by the inclosed return. I sensibly felt, at a critical period, the loss of the assistance of Lieutenant-Colonel Gimat, who received a musket ball in his foot, which obliged him to retire from the field. Captain Bets, of Laurens' corps, Captain Hunt and Lieutenant Mansfield, of Gimat's, were wounded with the bayonet in gallantly entering the work. Captain Kirkpatrick, of the corps of sappers and miners, received a wound in the ditch.

Inclosed is a return of the prisoners. The killed and wounded of the enemy did not exceed eight. Incapable of imitating examples of barbarity, and, forgetting recent provocations, the soldiery spared every man who ceased to fight.

RETURN OF THE KILLED AND WOUNDED IN THE ADVANCED CORPS COMMANDED BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HAMILTON, IN AN ATTACK ON THE ENEMY'S LEFT REDOUBT ON THE EVENING OF THE 14TH OCT., 1781.

	Lieut.-Cols.		Majors.		Capt's.		Subalterns.		Sergeants.		Rank and File	
	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.
Lt.-Col. Hamilton's battalion												4
Lt.-Col. Gimat's battalion		1				2			1	1	7	15
Lt.-Col. Laurens' detachment						1					1	5
Corps of Sappers and Miners						1						1
Total		1				4			1	1	8	25

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

YORKTOWN, Oct. 16, 1781.

Two nights ago, my Eliza, my duty and my honor obliged me to take a step in which your happiness was too much risked. I commanded an attack upon one of the enemy's redoubts; we carried it in an instant, and with little loss. You will see the particulars in the Philadelphia papers. There will be, certainly, nothing more of this kind; all the rest will be by approach; and if there should be another occasion, it will not fall to my turn to execute it.*

TO WASHINGTON.

March 1, 1782.

SIR:

I need not observe to your Excellency that respect for the opinion of Congress will not permit me to be indifferent to the impressions they may receive of my conduct. On this principle, though I do not think the subject of the inclosed letter of sufficient importance to request an official communication of it, yet I should be happy it might in some way be known to the members of that honorable body. Should they hereafter learn that, though retained on the list of their officers, I am not in the execution of the duties of my station, I wish them to be sensible that it is not a diminution of zeal which induces me voluntarily to withdraw my services, but that I only refrain from intruding them when circumstances seem to have made them either not necessary or not desired; and that I shall not receive emoluments without performing the conditions to which they were annexed. I also wish them to be apprised upon what footing my future continuance in the army is placed, that they may judge how far it is expedient to permit it. I therefore take the liberty to request the favor of your Excellency to impart the knowledge of my situation in such manner as you think most convenient.

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," ii., 275.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 1, 1782.

SIR:

Your Excellency will, I am persuaded, readily admit the force of this sentiment, that though it is the duty of a good citizen to devote his services to the public when it has occasion for them, he cannot with propriety or delicacy to himself obtrude them when it either has, or appears to have none. The difficulties I experienced last campaign in obtaining a command will not suffer me to make any further application on that head.

As I have many reasons to consider my being employed hereafter in a precarious light, the bare possibility of rendering an equivalent will not justify to my scruples the receiving any future emoluments from my commission. I therefore renounce, from this time, all claim to the compensations attached to my military station during the war or afterwards. But I have motives which will not permit me to resolve on a total resignation. I sincerely hope a prosperous train of affairs may continue to make it no inconvenience to decline the services of persons whose zeal, in worse times, was found not altogether useless; but as the most promising appearances are often reversed by unforeseen disasters, and as unfortunate events may again make the same zeal of some value, I am unwilling to put it out of my power to renew my exertions in the common cause in the line in which I have hitherto acted.

I shall accordingly retain my rank while I am permitted to do it, and take this opportunity to declare that I shall be at all times ready to obey the call of the public in any capacity, civil or military (consistent with what I owe to myself), in which there may be a prospect of my contributing to the final attainment of the object for which I embarked in the service.*

* This was inclosed in the preceding letter. "History of the Republic," ii., 279.

TO RICHARD K. MEADE.*

PHILADELPHIA, March, 1782.

A half hour since brought me the pleasure of your letter of December last. It went to Albany and came from thence to this place. I heartily felicitate you on the birth of your daughter. I can well conceive your happiness on that occasion by that which I feel on a similar one. Indeed, the sensations of a tender father of the child of a beloved mother can only be conceived by those who have experienced them.

Your heart, my dear Meade, is peculiarly formed for enjoyments of this kind. You have every right to be a happy husband—a happy father. You have every prospect of being so. I hope your felicity may never be interrupted.

You cannot imagine how entirely domestic I am growing. I lose all taste for the pursuits of ambition. I sigh for nothing but the company of my wife and my baby. The ties of duty alone, or imagined duty, keep me from renouncing public life altogether. It is, however, probable I may not any longer be engaged in it. I have explained to you the difficulties which I met with in obtaining a command last campaign. I thought it incompatible with the delicacy due to myself to make any application this campaign. I have expressed this sentiment in a letter to the General, and, retaining my rank only, have relinquished the emoluments of my commission, declaring myself, notwithstanding, ready at all times to obey the calls of the public. I don't expect to hear any of these, unless the state of our affairs should change for the worse, and, lest by any unforeseen accident that would happen, I choose to keep myself in a situation again to contribute my aid. This prevents a total resignation.

You were right in supposing I neglected to prepare what I promised you at Philadelphia. The truth is I was in such a hurry to get home that I could think of nothing else. As

* Col. Meade, of Virginia, was one of Washington's confidential and trusted aides-de-camp. He was a gallant soldier and an intimate friend of Hamilton.

I set out to-morrow morning for Albany, I cannot from this place send you the matter you wish.

Imagine, my dear Meade, what pleasure it *must* give Eliza and myself to know that Mrs. Meade interests herself in us. Without a personal acquaintance, we have been long attached to her. My visit at Mr. Fitzhugh's confirmed my partiality. Betsy is so fond of your family that she proposes to form a match between her boy and your girl, provided you will engage to make the latter as amiable as her mother.

Truly, my dear Meade, I often regret that fortune has cast our residence at such a distance from each other. It would be a serious addition to my happiness if we lived where I could see you every day, but fate has determined it otherwise. I am a little hurried, and can only request, in addition, that you will present me most affectionately to Mrs. Meade, and believe me to be, etc. .

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, May 18, 1782.

SIR:

I had this day the honor of receiving your letter of the 2d instant, and am much obliged by the mark of your confidence which it contains, and to Col. Stewart for his friendly intentions upon the occasion.

My military situation has indeed become so negative, that I have no motive to continue in it; and if my services could be of importance to the public in a civil line, I should cheerfully obey its command. But the plan which I have marked out to myself is the profession of the law, and I am now engaged in a course of studies for that purpose. Time is so precious to me that I could not put myself in the way of any interruptions, unless for an object of consequence to the public or to myself. The present is not of this nature. Such are the circumstances of this State, the benefit arising from the office you propose would not, during the war, exceed yearly one hundred pounds; for, unfortunately, I am

persuaded it will not pay annually into the Continental treasury above forty thousand pounds; and, on a peace establishment, this will not be for some time to come much more than doubled. You will perceive, sir, that an engagement of this kind does not correspond with my views, and does not afford a sufficient inducement to relinquish them.

I am not the less sensible of the obliging motives which dictated the offer, and it will be an additional one to that respect and esteem with which I have the honor to be, etc.

TO GENERAL KNOX.

ALBANY, June 7, 1782.

DEAR GENERAL:

We are told here that there is a British officer coming on from Cornwallis' army to be executed by way of retaliation for the murder of Capt. Huddy. As this appears to me clearly to be an ill-timed proceeding, and if persisted in will be derogatory to the national character, I cannot forbear communicating to you my ideas upon the subject. A sacrifice of this sort is entirely repugnant to the genius of the age we live in, and is without example in modern history, nor can it fail to be considered in Europe as wanton and unnecessary. It appears that the enemy (from necessity, I grant, but the operation is the same) have changed their system and adopted a more humane one; and, therefore, the only justifying motive of retaliation—the preventing a repetition of cruelty—ceases. But if this were not the case, so solemn and deliberate a sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty must be condemned on the present received notions of humanity, and encourage an opinion that we are, in a certain degree, in a state of barbarism. Our affairs are now in a prosperous train, and so vigorous—I would rather say so violent—a measure would want the plea of necessity. It would argue meanness in us that at this late stage of the war, in the midst of success, we should suddenly depart from that temper with which we have all along borne with a great and more frequent provocation. The death of André could

not have been dispensed with, but it must still be viewed at a distance as an act of *rigid justice.* If we wreak our resentment on an innocent person, it will be suspected that we are too fond of executions. I am persuaded it will have an influence peculiarly unfavorable to the General's character.

If it is seriously believed that in this advanced stage of affairs retaliation is necessary, let another mode be chosen. Let under actors be employed, and let the authority by which it is done be wrapt in obscurity and doubt. Let us endeavor to make it fall upon those who have had a direct or indirect share in the guilt. Let not the Commander-in-Chief—considered as the first and most respectable character among us—come forward in person and be the avowed author of an act at which every humane feeling revolts. Let us at least have as much address as the enemy; and, if we must have victims, appoint some obscure agents to perform the ceremony and bear the odium which must always attend even justice itself when directed by extreme severity.

For my own part, my dear sir, I think a business of this complexion entirely out of season. The time for it, if there ever was one, is past.

But it is said that the Commander-in-Chief has pledged himself for it and cannot recede. Inconsistency in this case would be better than consistency. But pretexts may be found and will be readily admitted in favor of humanity. Carleton will in all probability do something like apology and concession. He will give appearances of preventing every thing of the kind in future. Let the General appear to be satisfied with these appearances. The steps Carleton is said to have taken to suppress the refugee incursions will give the better color to lenity.

I address myself to you upon this occasion, because I know your liberality and your influence with the General. If you are of my opinion, I am sure you will employ it, if it should not be too late. I would not think a letter necessary, but I know how apt men are to be actuated by the circumstances which immediately surround them, and to be led into an ap-

probation of measures which, in another situation, they would disapprove. Mrs. Hamilton joins me in compliments to Mrs. Knox.*

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, June 17, 1782.

SIR:

The letter which you did me the honor to write me, of the 4th instant, came to my hands too late to permit me to answer it by the return of the same post. The explanation you give of your intention in your late offer makes it an object that will fully compensate for the time it will deduct from my other occupations. In accepting it, I have only one scruple, arising from a doubt whether the service I can render in the present state of things will be an equivalent for the compensation. The whole system (if it may be so called) of taxation in this State is radically vicious, burthensome to the people, and unproductive to government. As the matter now stands, there seems to be little for a continental receiver to do. The whole business appears to be thrown into the hands of the county treasurers, nor do I find that there is any appropriation made of any part of the taxes collected to continental purposes, or any provision to authorize payment to the officer you appoint; this, however, must be made. There is only one way in which I can imagine a prospect of being materially useful—that is, in

* This letter is printed from the original in the possession of the New England Historical Genealogical Society [Knox MSS., vol. viii. pp. 170–172]. It has already been printed in the "History of the Republic," ii., 284. The affair to which it refers was the murder of Captain Huddy, an American officer, by a party of refugees under the command of Captain Lippincott. The anger excited by this brutal outrage was intense, and Washington was so strongly moved, that he demanded from Sir Guy Carleton the surrender of Lippincott. This being refused, he ordered a British officer to be selected from among the prisoners and held in close confinement preparatory to execution if Sir Guy Carleton would not yield. The lot fell upon Captain Asgill, an officer of the Guards and a boy of nineteen. Captain Asgill was finally released, as Washington could not bring himself to this act of retaliation, even as a last extremity, and the real culprit escaped. It was while Asgill was in prison with death hanging over him that Hamilton wrote this letter.

seconding your application to the State. In popular assemblies much may sometimes be brought about by personal discussions, by entering into details and combating objections as they rise. If it should at any time be thought advisable by you to empower me to act in this capacity, I shall be happy to do every thing that depends on me to effectuate your views. I flatter myself to you, sir, I need not profess that I suggest this, not from a desire to augment the importance of office, but to advance the public interest.

It is of primary moment to me as soon as possible to take my station in the law, and on this consideration I am pressing to qualify myself for admission the next term, which will be the latter end of July. After this, if you think an interview with me necessary I will wait upon you in Philadelphia. In the meantime I shall be happy to receive your instructions, and shall direct my attention more particularly to acquiring whatever information may be useful to my future operations. I have read your publications at different times, but as I have not the papers containing them in my possession, it will be necessary that their contents should be comprised in your instructions. A meeting of the Legislature is summoned early in the next month, at which, if I previously receive your orders, it may be possible to put matters in train.

I am truly indebted to you, sir, for the disposition you have manifested upon this occasion; and I shall only add an assurance of my endeavors to justify your confidence and prove to you the sincerity of that respectful attachment with which I am, sir, etc.

TO COMFORT SANDS.*

ALBANY, June 23, 1782.

SIR:

Mr. Morris having lately offered me the appointment of Receiver of Continental Taxes for this State, I wish to collect as much and as accurate information as possible of the situa-

* A merchant and army contractor of New York.

tion of its money concerns. It will be, among other things, of great importance that I should form an idea of the money brought into the State and carried out of it; and, with a view to this, I take the liberty to request you will furnish me with an estimate of what you have reason to think you will lay out in this State in the course of a year in the transactions of your contract business. Mr. Duer has been so obliging as to promise me a sketch of his disbursements in this quarter, and has informed me that you are principally charged with what relates to the supplies of the main army as well as West Point, and will therefore be best able to enlighten me on that head. The calculation may not admit of absolute precision; but if it comes near the truth it will answer. It would be useful that you could distinguish, as nearly as possible, what part will be in specie, what in bank and other notes. As this is a matter that can be attended with no inconvenience to any person, and will be conducive to the public utility, I flatter myself you will favor me with a speedy communication.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, July 13, 1782.

SIR:

I have this moment received your letter of the second inst., and as the post will set out on its return in half an hour, I have little more than time to acknowledge the receipt of it.

I shall to-morrow morning commence a journey to Poughkeepsie, where the Legislature are assembled, and I will endeavor by every step in my power to second your views, though, I am sorry to add, without very sanguine expectations. I think it probable the Legislature will do something, but whatever momentary effort they may make, till the entire change of their present system very little will be done. To effect this, mountains of prejudice and particular interest are to be levelled. For my own part, considering the late serious misfortune of our ally, the spirit of reformation, of

wisdom, and of unanimity, which seems to have succeeded to that of blunder, perverseness, and dissension in the British Government, and the universal reluctance of these States to do what is right, I cannot help viewing our situation as critical, and I feel it the duty of every citizen to exert his faculties to the utmost to support the measures, especially those solid arrangements of finance on which our safety depends.

I will by the next post forward you the bond executed with proper sureties.

It is not in the spirit of compliment, but of sincerity, I assure you, that the opinion I entertain of him who presides in the department was not one of the smallest motives to my acceptance of the office; nor will that esteem and confidence which make me now sensibly feel the obliging expressions of your letter fail to have a great share in influencing my future exertions.

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, July 16, 1782.

SIR:

I have the honor to inclose your Excellency the copy of a warrant from the Honorable Robert Morris, Esq., Superintendent of the Finances of the United States, by which you will perceive that, agreeable to the resolution of Congress of the 2d of November last, he has appointed me Receiver of the Continental Taxes of the State. I am therefore to request that the Legislature will be pleased to vest in me the authority required by that resolution.

It is a part of my duty to explain to the Legislature, from time to time, the views of the Superintendent of Finance, in pursuance of the orders of Congress, that they may be the better enabled to judge of the measures most proper to be adopted for an effectual co-operation. For this purpose I pray your Excellency to impart my request, that I may have the honor of a conference with a committee of the two Houses, at such time and place as they may find convenient.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

POUGHKEEPSIE, July 22, 1782.

SIR:

Agreeably to my letter to you from Albany, I came to this place and had an interview with a committee of the Legislature, in which I urged the several matters contained in your instructions. I strongly represented the necessity of solid arrangements of finance, and, by way of argument, pointed out all the defects of the present system. I found every man convinced that something was wrong, but few that were willing to recognize the mischief when defined, and consent to the proper remedy. The quantum of taxes already imposed is so great as to make it useless to impose any others to a considerable amount. A bill has, however, passed both Houses, payable in specie, bank notes, or your notes, for eighteen thousand pounds. It is at present appropriated to your order, but I doubt whether some subsequent arrangement will not take place for a different appropriation. The Commander-in-Chief has applied for a quantity of forage, which the Legislature is devising the means of furnishing, and I fear it will finish by diverting the eighteen thousand pounds to that purpose. I have hitherto been able to prevent this, but as it is of indispensable importance to me to leave this place immediately to prepare for my examination, for which I have pledged myself the ensuing term, which is at hand, it is possible, after I have left it, that contrary ideas will prevail. Efforts have been made to introduce a species of negotiable certificates, which I have strenuously opposed. It has not yet taken place, but I am not clear how the matter will terminate.

Should the bill for the eighteen thousand pounds go out in its present form, I cannot hope that it will produce in the treasury above half the sum, such are the vices of our present mode of collection.

A bill has also passed the Assembly for collecting arrearages of taxes, payable in specie, bank notes, your notes, old Continental emissions at one hundred and twenty-eight for

one, and a species of certificates issued by the State for the purchase of horses. This is now before the Senate. The arrearages are very large.

Both Houses have unanimously passed a set of resolutions, to be transmitted to Congress and the several States, proposing a convention of the States, to enlarge the powers of Congress and vest them with funds. I think this a very eligible step, though I doubt of the concurrence of the other States; but I am certain without it they never will be brought to co-operate in any reasonable or effectual plan. Urge reforms or exertions, and the answer constantly is: What avails it for one State to make them without the concert of the others? It is in vain to expose the futility of this reasoning; it is founded in all those passions which have the strongest influence on the human mind.

The Legislature have also appointed, at my instance, a committee to devise, in its recess, a more effectual system of taxation, and to communicate with me on this subject. A good deal will depend on the success of this attempt. Convinced of the absurdity of multiplying taxes in the present mode, where, in effect, the payment is voluntary, and the money received exhausted in the collection, I have labored chiefly to instil the necessity of a change in the plan, and, though not so rapidly as the exigency of public affairs requires, truth seems to be making some progress.

There is no other appropriation to the use of Congress than of the eighteen thousand pounds.

I shall, as soon as possible, give you a full and just view of the situation and temper of this State. This cannot be till after my intended examination; that over, I shall lay myself out in every way that can promote your views and the public good.

I am informed you have an appointment to make of a Commissioner of Accounts for this State. Permit me to suggest the expediency of choosing a citizen of the State; a man who, to the qualifications requisite for the execution of the office, adds an influence in its affairs. I need not par-

ticularize the reasons of this suggestion. In my next I will also take the liberty to mention some characters.

I omitted mentioning that the two Houses have also passed a bill, authorizing Congress to adjust the quotas of the States on equitable principles, agreeably to your recommendation. I enclose you the bond executed jointly with General Schuyler.

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

ALBANY, August 3, 1782.

SIR:

I have lately received a letter from the Superintendent of Finance, inclosing a copy of a circular-letter from him to the several States, dated twenty-fifth July, '81, in which he requests information on the following important points.

"What supplies, of every kind, money, provisions, forage, transportation, etc., have been furnished by this State to the United States, since the eighteenth of March, 1780."

"The amount of the money in the treasury; the sums expected to be there; the times they will probably be brought in; the appropriations."

"The amount of the different paper currencies in the State; the probable increase, or decrease, of each; and the respective rates of depreciation."

"The Acts passed since the eighteenth of March, 1780, for raising taxes, furnishing supplies, etc.; the manner they have been executed; the time necessary for them to operate; the consequences of their operation; the policy of the State relative to laying, assessing, levying, and collecting taxes."

In his letter, which is *circular*, to the Receivers, he says the answers he has received to these inquiries are few and short of the object; and he therefore urges me to take the most speedy and effectual means in my power, to enable him to form a proper judgment on such of the subjects referred to as the actual state of things renders it important to know.

In compliance with this, I request the favor of your Excel-

lency to inform me what steps have been taken on the several heads of which the above is an abstract; and what progress has been made in the business; particularly with respect to the first article. I shall also be much obliged to you to direct Mr. Holt to furnish me, without delay, with the Acts mentioned in the inclosed list.

Your Excellency must have been too sensible of the necessity of enabling the Director of the Finances of the United States to form a just judgment of the true state of our affairs, to have omitted any measure in your power to procure the fullest information on the several matters submitted to you: and I am persuaded the business is in such a train that little will be left for me to do.

I entreat you will do me the honor to let me hear from you as soon as possible on the subject.

It would promote the public business, if you would be so good as to direct Mr. Banker to supply me with such information as I might call upon him for. He is very obliging, but without some authority for the purpose, there is a delicacy in calling upon him. I wrote at the same time to Mr. Holt, printer for the State, desiring him to forward me the copies of the Acts above mentioned; and telling him that if the Governor did not make satisfaction, I would do it. These Acts were all those relative to finance and supply, from March 18, 1780, to this time.

TO THE COUNTY TREASURERS.

ALBANY, August 5, 1782.

SIR:

It will be of great utility to the State, and essential to the execution of my instructions from the Superintendent of Finance, that I should be able to ascertain, as speedily as possible, the expense attending the collection of taxes within this State. In order to this, I shall be much obliged to you to send me without delay an account of what you have received in your county, since the beginning of the year '80 to this time, as well for the taxes laid for county purposes, as

for those imposed by the Legislature; and of the expenses of every kind attending the collection; those of the supervisors, assessors, the allowance to the collectors and to myself.

When I assure you I want this information for an important purpose, I doubt not you will forward it to me as speedily as it can be prepared, and with as much accuracy as circumstances will permit; by doing which you will serve the public and oblige, sir, etc.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, August 13, 1782.

SIR:

I promised you in former letters to give you a full view of the situation and temper of this State. I now sit down to execute that task.

You have already in your possession a pretty just picture of the State, drawn by the Legislature, perhaps too highly-colored in some places, but just and, in the main, true.

It is the opinion of the most sensible men with whom I converse, who are best acquainted with the circumstances of the State, and who are least disposed to exaggerate its distress as an excuse for inactivity, that its faculties for revenue are diminished at least two thirds.

It will not be difficult to conceive this when we consider that five out of the fourteen counties of which the State is composed, including the capital, are in the hands of the enemy; that two and part of a third have revolted; two others have been desolated the greater part by the ravages of the enemy and of our own troops, and the remaining four have more or less suffered partial injuries from the same causes. Adding the fragments of some to repair the losses of others, the efficient property, strength, and force of the State will consist in little more than four counties.

In the distribution of taxes before the war, the city of New York used to be rated at one third of the whole; but this was too high, owing probably to the prevailing of the country influence. Its proper proportion I should judge to

have been about one fourth, which serves further to illustrate the probable decrease of the State.

Our population, indeed, is not diminished in the same degree, as many of the inhabitants of the dismembered and ruined counties, who have left their habitations, are dispersed through those which remain; and it would seem that the labor of the additional hands ought to ensure the culture and value of these. But there are many deductions to be made from this apparent advantage: the numbers that have *recruited* the British army; those that have been furnished to ours; the emigrations to Vermont and to the neighboring States, less harassed by the war, and affording better encouragements to industry, both which have been considerable.

Besides these circumstances, many of the fugitive families are a burthen for their substance upon the State. The fact is, labor is much dearer than before the war.

This State has certainly made, in the course of the war, great exertions, and, upon many occasions, of the most exhausting kind. This has sometimes happened from want of judgment; at others, from necessity. When the army, as has too often been the case, has been threatened with some fatal calamity—for want of provisions, forage, the means of transportation, etc.,—in consequence of pressing applications from the Commander-in-Chief, the Legislature have been obliged to have recourse to extraordinary expedients to answer the pressing emergency, which have both distressed and disgusted the people. There is no doubt that, with a prudent and systematic administration, the State might have rendered more benefit to the common cause, with less inconvenience to itself, than by all its forced efforts; but there, as everywhere else, we have wanted experience and knowledge. And, indeed, had this not been the case, every thing everywhere has been so radically wrong, that it was difficult, if not impossible, for any one State to be right.

The exposed situation of the frontier, and the frequent

calls upon the inhabitants for personal service on each extremity, by interfering with industry, have contributed to impoverish the State and fatigue the people.

Deprived of foreign trade, our internal traffic is carried on upon the most disadvantageous terms. It divides itself into three branches: with the city of New York, with Jersey and Pennsylvania, and with New England.

That with New York consists chiefly of luxuries on one part and returns of specie on the other. I imagine we have taken goods from that place to the amount of near £30,000. The Legislature passed a severe law to prevent this intercourse, but what will laws avail against the ingenuity and intrepidity of avarice?

From Jersey and Pennsylvania we take about £30,000 more, and we pay almost entirely in cash.

From Massachusetts and other parts of New England we purchase to the amout of about £50,000, principally in tea and salt. (The articles of tea and salt alone cost this State the annual sum of £60,000.) We sell to these States to the value of about £30,000.

The immense land transportation, of which the chief part is carried on by the subjects of other States, is a vast incumbrance upon our trade.

The principal article we have to throw in the opposite scale is the expenditures of the army. Mr. Sands informs me that the contractors for the main army and West Point lay out in this State at the rate of about $60,000 a year; Mr. Duer, for these northern posts, about $30,000. If the Quartermaster-General expends as much more in his department, the whole will amount to about $180,000. I speak of what is paid for in specie, or such paper as answers the purpose of specie. These calculations cannot absolutely be relied on, because the data are necessarily uncertain, but they are the result of the best information I can obtain, and, if near the truth, prove that the general balance of trade is against us—a plain symptom of which is *an extreme* and *universal* scarcity of money.

The situation of the State with respect to its internal government is not more pleasing. Here we find the general disease which infects all our constitutions—an excess of popularity. There is no *order* that has a will of its own. The inquiry constantly is what will *please*, not what will *benefit*, the people. In such a government there can be nothing but temporary expenditure, fickleness, and folly.

But the point of view in which this subject will be interesting to you is that which relates to our finances. I gave you, in a former letter, a sketch of our plan of taxation, but I will now be more particular.

The general principle of it is apparent, according to *circumstances and abilities collectively considered.* The ostensible reason for adopting this vague basis was a desire of equality. It was pretended that this could not be obtained so well by any fixed tariff of taxable property, as by leaving it to the discretion of persons chosen by the people themselves to determine the ability of each citizen. But perhaps the true reason was a desire to discriminate between the *Whigs* and *Tories.* This chimerical attempt at perfect equality has resulted in total inequality, or rather this narrow disposition to overburthen a particular class of citizens (living under the protection of the government) has been retorted upon the contrivers or their friends, wherever that class has been numerous enough to preponderate in the election of the officers who were to execute the law. The exterior figure a man makes, the decency and meanness of his manner of living, the personal friendships or dislikes of the assessors, have much more share in determining what individuals shall pay, than the proportion of property.

The Legislature first *assesses* or quotas the several counties. Here the evil begins—the members cabal and intrigue to throw the *burthen* off their respective constituents. Address and influence, more than considerations of real ability, prevail. A great deal of time is lost, and a great deal of expense incurred, before the juggle is ended and the necessary compromise made.

The supervisors, of whom there are upon an average sixteen in each county, meet at the notification of the county clerk, and assign their proportions to the subdivisions of the county, and, in the distribution, play over the same game which was played in the Legislature.

The assessors, assembled on a like notification, according to their fancies, determine the proportion of each individual; a list of which being made out and signed by the supervisors, is a warrant to the collectors. There are near an hundred upon an average in each county. The allowance to these officers has been various. It is now six shillings a day, besides expenses. In some cases they have been limited to a particular time for executing the business; but, in general, it is left to their discretion, and the greater part of them are not in a hurry to complete it, as they have a compensation for their trouble and live better at the public charge than they are accustomed to do at their own. The consequence is not only delay, but a heavy expense.

It now remains for the collectors to collect the tax, and it is the duty of the supervisors to see that they do it. Both these officers are elective as well as that of the assessor; and, of course, there is little disposition to risk the displeasure of those who elect. They have no motive of interest to stimulate them to their duty equivalent to the inconvenience of performing it. The collector is entitled to the trifling compensation of sometimes four, sometimes six pence, out of each pound he collects, and is liable to the trifling penalty of twenty or twenty-five pounds for neglect of duty. The supervisors have no interest at all in the collections, and it will not on this account appear extraordinary, that, with continual delinquencies in the collection, there has never been a single prosecution. As I observed on a former occasion, if the collector happens to be a zealous man and lives in a zealous neighborhood, the taxes are collected; if either of these requisites are wanting, the collection languishes or entirely fails.

When the taxes are collected they are paid to the county

treasurer, an officer chosen by the supervisors. The collectors are responsible to him also; but as he is allowed only one fourth or one half per cent., he has no sufficient inducement to incur the odium of compelling them to do their duty.

The county treasurer pays what he receives in to the State treasurer, who has an annual salary of £300, and has nothing to do but to receive and pay out according to the appropriation of the Legislature.

Notwithstanding the obvious defects of this system; notwithstanding experience has shown it to be iniquitous and inefficient, and that all attempts to amend it without totally changing it are fruitless; notwithstanding there is a pretty general discontent from the inequality of the taxes, still ancient habits, ignorance, the spirit of the times, the opportunity afforded to some popular characters of *screening* themselves by intriguing with the assessors, have hitherto proved an overmatch for common sense and common justice, as well as the manifest advantage of the State and of the United States.

The temper of the State, which I shall now describe, may be considered under two heads—that of the rulers and that of the people.

The rulers are generally zealous in the common cause, though their zeal is oftentimes misdirected. They are jealous of their own power; but yet, as this State is the immediate theatre of the war, these apprehensions of danger, and an opinion that they are obliged to do more than their neighbors, make them very willing to part with power in favor of the Federal Government. This last opinion and an idea added to it, that they have no credit for their past exertions, has put them out of humor and indisposed many of them for future exertions. I have heard several assert that in the present situation of this State, nothing more ought to be expected than that it maintain its own government and keep up its quota of troops.

This sentiment, however, is as yet confined to few, but it is too palpable not to make proselytes.

The rulers of this State are attached to the alliance, as are Whigs generally. They have also great confidence in you personally, but pretty general exception has been taken to a certain letter of yours written, I believe, in the winter or spring. The idea imbibed is that it contains a reflection upon them for their past exertions. I have on every account combated this impression, which could not fail to have an ill effect, and I mention it to you with freedom, because it is essential you should know the temper of the States respecting yourself.

As to the people, in the early periods of the war, near one half of them were avowedly more attached to Great Britain than to their liberty, but the energy of the government has subdued all opposition. The State by different means has been purged of a large part of its malcontents; but there still remains, I dare say, a third, whose secret wishes are on the side of the ememy; the remainder sigh for peace, murmur at taxes, clamor at their rulers, change one incapable man for another more incapable, and, I fear, if left to themselves, would, too many of them, be willing to purchase peace at any price—not from inclination to Great Britain or disaffection to independence, but from mere supineness and avarice.

† The speculation of evils from the claims of Great Britain gives way to the pressure of inconveniences actually felt, and we required the event which has lately happened—the recognition of our independence by the Dutch—to give a new spring to the public hopes and the public passions. This has had a good effect, and if the Legislature can be brought to adopt a wise plan for its finances, we may put the people in better humor, and give a more regular and durable movement to the machine. The people of this State, as far as my observation goes, have as much firmness in their make and as much submission to government as those of any part of the Union. It remains for me to give you an explicit opinion of what is practicable for this State to do.

Even with a judicious plan of taxation I do not think the State can afford, or the people will bear, to pay more than

£70,000 or £80,000 a year. In its entire and flourishing state, according to my mode of calculation it could not have exceeded £230,000 or £240,000; and reduced as it is, with the wheels of circulation so exceedingly clogged for want of commerce and a sufficient medium, more than I have said cannot be expected. Past experience will not authorize a more flattering conclusion. Out of this is to be deducted the expense of the interior administration and the money necessary for the levies of men. The first amounts to about £15,000, as you will perceive by the inclosed slate; but I suppose the Legislature would choose to retain £20,000. The money hitherto yearly expended in recruits has amounted to between £20,000 and £30,000; but on a proper plan £10,000 might suffice. There would then remain £40,000 for your department.

But this is on the supposition of a change of system; for with the present I doubt there being paid into the Continental treasury one third of that sum. I am endeavoring to collect materials for greater certainty upon this subject. But the business of supplies has been so diversified, lodged in such a variety of independent hands, and so carelessly transacted, that it is hardly possible to get any tolerable idea of the gross and net product.

With the help of these materials I shall strive to convince the committee, when they meet, that a change of measures is essential; if they enter cordially into right views, we may succeed; but I confess I fear more than I hope.

I have taken every step in my power to procure the information you have desired in your letter of July 18th. The most material part of it, an account of the supplies furnished since March, '80, has been committed to Col. Hay. I have written to him in pressing terms to *accelerate* the preparation.

You will perceive, sir, I have neither flattered the State nor encouraged high expectations. I thought it my duty to exhibit things as they are, not as they ought to be. I shall be sorry to give you an ill opinion of the State for want of

equal candor in the representations of others; for, however disagreeable the reflection, I have too much reason to believe that the true picture of other States would be, in proportion to their circumstances, equally unpromising. All my inquiries and all that appears induce this opinion. I intend this letter in *confidence* to yourself, and therefore I endorse it *private*.

Before I conclude I will say a word on a point that possibly you could wish to be informed about. The contract up this way is executed generally to the satisfaction of the officers and soldiers, which is the more meritorious in the contractor, as in all *probability* it will be to him a losing undertaking.*

TO JOHN LAURENS.†

August 15, 1782.

I received with great pleasure, my dear Laurens, the letter which you wrote me in —— last. Your wishes in one respect are gratified. This State has pretty unanimously elected me to Congress. My time of service commences in November. It is not probable it will result in what you mention. I hope it is too late. We have great reason to flatter ourselves. Peace on our own terms is upon the carpet. The making it is in good hands. It is said your father is exchanged for Cornwallis, and gone to Paris to meet the other commissioners, and that Granville, on the part of England, has made a second trip there; in the last instance, vested with plenipotentiary powers.

I fear there may be obstacles, but I hope they may be surmounted.

Peace made, my dear friend, a new scene opens. The ob-

* This long and interesting letter is now first printed entire from the Hamilton papers in the State Department. A small portion beginning at the sentence, "The speculation of evils," marked thus †, [page 69] and continuing to the end, has been printed in the edition of 1850, vol. i., 295.

† In those days of slow mails, this letter probably never reached Laurens, who fell near the Combahee in a skirmish Aug. 27th,

ject then will be to make our independence a blessing. To do this we must secure our Union on solid foundations—a herculean task,—and to effect which, mountains of prejudice must be levelled! It requires all the virtue and all the abilities of the country. Quit your sword, my friend; put on the toga. Come to Congress. We know each other's sentiments; our views are the same. We have fought side by side to make America free; let us hand in hand struggle to make her happy. Remember me to General Greene with all the warmth of sincere attachment. Yours forever.*

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

ALBANY, August 25, 1782.

SIR:

By advices from Philadelphia, I find that the present is a period rather critical on the subject of money, and concentres a variety of demands which it is not easy to satisfy.

It becomes, therefore, of importance to the Financier to avail himself of every immediate resource.

This induces me to request you will be so good as to inform me whether there is any near prospect of obtaining the loan directed to be applied to Continental use; also, whether any measures can be taken to accelerate the collection of the late tax imposed for the same use.

I would willingly write to the county treasurers myself, but, unauthorized as I am, I could expect no good effect from it.†

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, August 25, 1782.

SIR:

This letter serves only to transmit the two last papers. I wish the measures I have taken to satisfy you on the points you desire to be informed of had been attended to with so

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," ii., 300.

† Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

much success as to enable me now to transmit the result. But I find a singular confusion in the accounts kept by the public officers from whom I must necessarily derive my information, and a singular dilatoriness in complying with my application, partly from indolence and partly from jealousy of the office. I hope, by the next post, to transmit you information on some particulars.

TO COLONEL RICHARD K. MEADE.

ALBANY, August 27, 1782.

I thank you, my dear Meade, for your letter of the first of this month, which you will perceive has travelled much faster than has been usual with our letters. Our correspondence hitherto has been unfortunate; nor, in fact, can either of us compliment himself on his punctuality, but you were right in concluding that, however indolence or accident may interrupt our intercourse, nothing will interrupt our friendship. Mine for you is built on a solid basis of a full conviction that you deserve it, and that it is reciprocal; and it is the more firmly fixed because you have few competitors. Experience is a continual comment on the worthlessness of the human race; and the few exceptions we find have the greater right to be valued in proportion as they are rare. I know few men estimable, fewer amiable; and when I meet with one of the last description, it is not in my power to withhold my affection.

[You reproach me with not having said enough about our little stranger. When I wrote last I was not sufficiently acquainted with him to give you his character. I may now assure you that your daughter, when she sees him, will not consult you about the choice, or will only do it in respect to the rules of decorum. He is truly a very fine young gentleman, the most agreeable in his conversation and manners of any I ever knew, nor less remarkable for his intelligence and sweetness of temper. You are not to imagine, by my beginning with his mental qualifications,

that he is defective in personal. It is agreed on all hands that he is handsome; his features are good, his eye is not only sprightly and expressive, but full of benignity. His attitude in sitting, is, by connoisseurs, esteemed graceful, and he has a method of waving his hand that announces the future orator. He stands, however, rather awkwardly, and as his legs have not all the delicate slimness of his father's, it is feared he may never excel as much in dancing, which is probably the only accomplishment in which he will not be a model. If he has any fault in manners, he laughs too much. He has now passed his seventh month. I am glad to find your prospect of being settled approaches. I am sure you will reallize all the happiness you promise yourself with your amiable partner. I wish fortune had not cast our lots at such a distance. Mrs. Meade, you, Betsey, and myself would make a most affectionate and most happy *partie quarré*.]

As to myself, I shall sit down in New York when it opens; and this period, we are told, approaches. No man looks forward to a peace with more pleasure than I do; though no man would sacrifice less to it than myself if I were not convinced that the people sigh for peace.

I have been studying the law for some months, and have lately been licensed as an attorney. I wish to prepare myself by October for examination as a counsellor; but some public avocation may possibly prevent me.

I had almost forgotten to tell you that I have been pretty unanimously elected, by the Legislature of this State, a member of Congress, to begin to serve in November. I do not hope to reform the State, although I shall endeavor to do all the good I can.

[Suffer Betsey and me to present our love to Mrs. Meade. She has a sisterly affection for you. My respects, if you please, to Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh. God bless you.]*

* This letter was partly printed in the edition of 1850. It is now completed from the "History of the Republic," ii., 305. The added portions are inclosed in brackets.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, August 31, 1782.

SIR:

I send you herewith all the acts of the Legislature of this State since the government has been organized; on the margin of which I have numbered all the acts relative to the matters you mention in your letter of July, '81, to the States agreeable to the within list. I inclose you the papers of the last week.

The indolence of some and the repugnancy of others make every trifle lag so much in the execution, that I am not able at this time to give you any further information. I wish to hear from you on the subject of my former letters previous to the meeting of the committee—the 15th of the ensuing month.

TO THE COUNTY TREASURERS.

ALBANY, Sept. 7, 1782.

SIR:

The fifteenth of this month is the period fixed for the payment of the tax imposed at the last meeting of the Legislature for the use of the United States. The public exigencies and the reputation of the State require that every exertion should be made to collect this tax with punctuality and dispatch; and it is therefore my duty to urge you that you employ the powers vested in you, and all your personal influence, to induce the collectors to expedite the collection with all the zeal and vigor in their power. While the other States are all doing something, as a citizen of this, I shall feel a sensible mortification in being obliged to continue publishing to the others, that this State pays nothing in support of the war, as I have been under the necessity of doing the last two months. Besides this, and other still more weighty considerations, a regard to the subjects of the State itself demands every exertion in our power, They have parted with their property on the public faith, and it is impossible for the public to fulfil its engagements to in-

dividuals, unless it is enabled to do it by the equal and just contributions of the community at large.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, Sept. 7, 1782.

SIR:

I have had the inclosed ready for some time; but in hopes of receiving the returns of the certificates mentioned in memorandum B, I delayed sending the present sketch. Having even received no answers from some of the parties who live at a distance from me, I suspect they have done their business in so disorderly a manner (to say nothing worse of it) that they are at a loss how to render the accounts; and I have therefore concluded not to detain any longer what I have procured.

I do not take the step mentioned in memorandum A, because I doubted its propriety. It might raise expectations about the old money, which, possibly, it may not enter into your plans to raise; and, besides this, by knowing what has been called in, in each State (which, from the sketch I send you, will appear as to this), you can determine the balance of omissions remaining out, except what may have worn out and been accidentally destroyed. If you desire this step to be taken, I will obey your commands.

I have said nothing of the rates of depreciation, because I imagine your letter, written in July, '80, had reference to the rates at which the money was then actually circulating, and the circulation has now totally ceased. The laws I sent you by the last post will inform you of the rates fixed at different periods by the Legislature: forty, seventy-five, and, lastly, one hundred and twenty-eight. I am obliged to infer there is a studied backwardness in the officers of the State, who ought to give me the information you require respecting the supplies of different kinds which have been furnished to the use of the United States. Indeed, I find on inquiry, that their joint information will not be so full as to satisfy your intentions; and that this cannot be done till you have

appointed a commissioner of accounts, authorized to enter into all the details, aided by some legislative arrangement which may be obtained the next session.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.*

ALBANY, Sept. 7, 1782.

DEAR SIR:

I this day received your letter of the 20th August. Mr. Morris has advised me of the bills you describe, and directed my purchasing them, together with his notes, and the bank notes, with what money shall come into my hands on public account. They are now beginning to collect the tax imposed for the use of the United States, though I can as yet form no judgment with what success or expedition. I shall with pleasure give you the information you ask, but I would rather wish to be excused from anticipation by previous deposits in my hands, as that will, in some measure, pledge me to give a preference to the bills deposited, and may hereafter expose me to a charge of partiality. There have been several applications to me for a similar anticipation, which I have avoided, reserving to myself the power of paying the bills as they shall be presented, and in proportion to the nearness or remoteness of the periods of payments.

You may, however, depend that I shall be happy to assist your department, and will keep in view your present request. I hope towards the latter end of the month I shall receive something considerable on the late tax.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, Sept. 14, 1782.

SIR:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th of August, the contents of which shall be executed.

I have just received by the post accounts of the specific

* The well-known Massachusetts soldier and statesman; at this time quarter-master-general.

supplies furnished by the State, copies of which I shall prepare to be transmitted to you by the next post, as I am to return the originals, which are for the inspection of the Legislature. I hope to add to these accounts of the moneys supplied.

I have written to you a number of letters since my journey to Poughkeepsie, of which, as they contain some things of a confidential nature, I am not without anxiety to learn the safe arrival.

I should also have been happy to have received your instructions against the meeting of the committee, which is to take place to-morrow. As they will have other business, if I hear from you by the next post, I shall not be too late. I am at a loss to know whether I ought to press the establishment of permanent *funds* or not; though, unless I receive your instructions, following my own apprehensions of what are probably your views, I shall dwell on this article.

I inclose you a copy of the letter of the Governor, of the 2d inst., from which you will see his hopes. Mine are not so good. In this vicinity, always delinquent, little is doing.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, Sept. 21, 1782.

SIR:

The hurry in which I wrote to you by the last post prevented my examining particularly the papers which I informed you I had received. On a more careful inspection of them I found them not so complete as I had hoped. There is a general state of specific supplies; but the returns referred to in that for the particulars were by some mistake omitted. I have written for them, but they have not yet arrived; when they do I shall lose no time in forwarding them.

I observe there is nothing respecting transportation, and there is a part of the supplies for the period before Colonel Hay came into office which is estimated on a scale of proportion—too vague a method to be satisfactory. I have urged

him to send me an account of the transportation, and to collect, as speedily as possible, official returns of the supplies above mentioned.

There is a practice obtaining, which appears to me to contravene your views. The contractors, I am informed, have gotten into a method of carrying your bills immediately to the collectors and drawing the specie out of their hands, by which means the paper never goes into circulation at all, but passes, so to speak, immediately out of one hand of the public into the other. The people, therefore, can never be familiarized to the paper, nor can it ever obtain a general currency.

If the specie were to come in to the receivers, and the contractors were left under a necessity of exerting their influence to induce the inhabitants to take your notes, to be afterwards redeemed by the receivers agreeably to your plan, this would gradually accustom the people to place confidence in the notes, and though the circulation at first should be momentary, it might come to be more permanent.

I am in doubt whether, on the mere speculation of an evil, without your instructions, I ought to take any step to prevent this practice. For, should I forbid the exchange, it might possibly cause a suspicion that there was a preference of the paper to the specie, which might injure its credit.

I have thought of a method to prevent, without forbidding it in direct terms. This was to require each collector to return the names of the persons from whom he received taxes, and in different columns specify the kind of money, whether specie, your notes, or bank notes, in which the tax was paid, giving the inhabitants receipts accordingly, and paying in the money in the same species in which it was received. This would cover the object.

I have tried to prevail upon the county treasurer of this place to instruct the collectors accordingly; but the great aim of all these people is to avoid trouble, and he affected to consider the matter as a Herculean labor. Nor will it be done without a legislative injunction.

A method of this kind would tend much to check fraud in the collectors, and would have many good consequences.

I thought it my duty, at any rate, to apprise you of the practice, that, if my apprehensions are right, it may not be continued without control. I have reason to believe it is very extensive—by no means confined to this State.

Permit me to make one more observation. Your notes, though in credit with the merchants by way of remittance, do not enter far into ordinary circulation, and this principally on account of their size; which even makes them inconvenient for paying taxes. The taxes of very few amount to twenty dollars a single tax; and though the farmers might combine to sell their produce for the notes, to pay the taxes jointly; yet this is not always convenient, and will seldom be practised. If the notes were, in considerable part, of five eight, or ten dollars, their circulation would be far more general; the merchants would, even in their retail operations, give specie in exchange for balances, which few of them care to do, or can do, with the larger notes; though they are willing to take them for their goods.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

September 28, 1782.

SIR:

I have been honored this week with your letters of the 28th August, 6th, 12th, and 17th instant, with their inclosures.

It gives me the most real pleasure to find that my past communications have met with your approbation; and I feel a particular satisfaction in the friendly confidence which your letters manifest.

I am persuaded that substantial reasons have determined your choice in a particular instance to Doctor Tillotson; and I am flattered by the attention you have obligingly paid to my recommendations of Col. Malcolm and Mr. Lawrence. Those gentlemen are now here. They make you the warmest acknowledgments for your offer, but decline leaving the

State; which, indeed, is not compatible with the present prospects of either of them.

I am glad to have had an opportunity of perusing your letter to this State, at which so much exception has been taken; because it has confirmed me in what I presumed, that there has been much unjustifiable ill-humor upon the occasion. I will make use of the knowledge I have to combat misrepresentation.

Yours of the 29th of July, to Congress, is full of principles and arguments as luminous as they are conclusive. 'T is to be lamented that they have not had more weight than we are to infer from the momentary expedient adopted by the resolutions of the 4th and 10th; which will, alone, not be satisfactory to the public creditors; and I fear will only tend to embarrass your present operations, without answering the end in view. The more I see, the more I find reason for those who love this country to weep over its blindness.

The committee on the subject of taxation are met. Some have their plans, and they must protect their own children, however misshapen; others have none, but are determined to find fault with all. I expect little, but I shall promote any thing, though imperfect, that will mend our situation.

The public creditors in this quarter have had a meeting, and appointed a committee to devise measures. The committee will report petitions to Congress, the Legislature, and an address to the public creditors in other parts of the State to appoint persons to meet in convention, to unite in some common measure. I believe they will also propose a general convention of all the creditors in the different States.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, October 5, 1782.

SIR:

In my last I informed you that the committee appointed by the Legislature on the subject of taxation were together. In spite of my efforts, they have parted without doing any

thing decisive. They have, indeed, agreed upon several matters, and those of importance, but they have not reduced them to the form of a report, which, in fact, leaves every thing afloat, to be governed by the impressions of the moment when the Legislature meets.

The points agreed upon are these: That there shall be an actual valuation of land, and a tax of so much in the pound,—the great diversity in the qualities of land would not suffer them to listen to an estimated valuation, or to a tax by the quantity, agreeably to the idea in your late report to Congress: that there shall be also a tariff of all personal property, to be also taxed at so much in the pound; that there shall be a specific tax on carriages, clocks, watches, and other similar articles of luxury; that money at usury shall be taxed at a fixed rate in the pound, excluding that which is loaned to the public; that houses in all towns shall be taxed at a certain proportion of the annual rent; that there shall be a poll-tax on all single men from fifteen upwards; and that the collection of the taxes should be advertised to the lowest bidder, at a fixed rate per cent., bearing all subordinate expenses.

Among other things which were rejected, I pressed hard for an excise on distilled liquors, but all that could be carried on this article was a license on taverns.

The committee were pretty generally of opinion that the system of funding for payment of old debts and for procuring further credit, was wise and indispensable, but a majority thought it would be unwise in one State to contribute in this way alone.

Nothing was decided on the quantum of taxes which the State was able to pay; those who went furthest did not exceed seventy thousand pounds, of which fifty for the use of the United States.

I send you my cash account, which is for what has been received in this county. We have not heard from the others.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, October 9, 1782.

SIR:

I wrote you a hasty letter by the last post, which arrived late, and set out very soon after its arrival.

Since that I have received two thousand dollars, all in your bills on Mr. Swanwick, in favor of Messrs. Sands & Co. One half the sum is in bills payable in February next, exchanged by them for specie with one of the county treasurers. I am sensible there is an inconvenience in this in different ways, but it appears by your letter of the 19th of July that you mean to have those bills received upon the same footing with your and the bank notes, without regard to the time they have to run. I have, however, induced the treasurer to write in a manner that I hope will discourage like exchanges in future without giving any unfavorable impression. Besides the inconvenience from this practice, which I mentioned in a former letter, there is another which I am persuaded will result.

People will get into a way of discounting your bills and notes with the treasurers and collectors, to the injury of their credit.

Probably you are apprised of a fact which, however, I think it my duty to mention: It is that the bank notes pass pretty currently as cash, with a manifest preference to your notes.

I have not yet received the other papers relative to the account of supplies I have sent you.

I hope to be able to inclose you a copy of the address of the public creditors in this town to the rest of that denomination in this State. It inculcates the ideas which ought to prevail.

I have not yet heard of your messenger, Mr. Brown. I presume his circuit is regulated by your occasional direction.*

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

TO DE NOAILLES.*

1782.

Esteem for your talents and acquirements is a sentiment which, from my earliest acquaintance with you, my dear Viscount, I have shared in common with all those who have the happiness of knowing you; but a better knowledge of your character has given it, in my eyes, a more intrinsic merit, and has attached me to you by a friendship founded upon qualities as rare as they are estimable. Averse as I am to professions, I cannot forbear indulging this declaration, to express to you the pleasure I felt at receiving (after an inexplicable delay) the letter you were so obliging as to write me before your departure from Boston. It was of that kind which is always produced by those attentions of friends we value: which, not being invited by circumstances, nor necessitated by the forms of society, bespeak the warmth of the heart. At least my partiality for you makes me fond of viewing it in this light, and I cherish the opinion.

I was chagrined to find that you left us with an intention not to return. Though I should be happy if, by a removal of the war, this country should cease to be a proper theatre for your exertions, yet, if it continues to be so, I hope you will find sufficient motives to engage you to change your resolution. Wherever you are you will be useful and distinguished; but the ardent desire I have of meeting you again makes me wish America may be your destination. I would willingly do it in France, as you invite me to do, but the prospect of this is remote. I must make a more solid establishment here before I can conveniently go abroad.

* Louis Marie, Vicomte de Noailles, one of the most brilliant of the French officers in our Revolution. After his return to France he took an active part on the popular side in the Revolution, but fled in 1792, being then with the army, and took refuge in England and afterwards in the United States. His wife was guillotined in 1794. After the reign of terror was over he returned to France, had his name erased from the list of *emigrés*, and took service again in the army. In 1803 he was sent to St. Domingo, and on his way thence to Cuba he was killed in an action with an English corvette.

There is no country I have a greater curiosity to see, or which I am persuaded would be so interesting to me as yours. I should be happy to renew and improve the valuable acquaintances from thence, which this war has given me an opportunity of making; and, though I could not flatter myself with deriving any advantage from it, I am persuaded it is there I should meet with the greatest number of those you describe, who, etc.,—but considerations of primary importance will oblige me to submit to the mortification of deferring my visit.

In the meantime I should be too much the gainer by communication with you, not gladly to embrace the offer you so politely make for writing to each other.

The period, since you left us, has been too barren of events to enable me to impart any thing worth attention. The enemy continue in possession of Charleston and Savannah, and leave us masters of the rest of the country. General Greene has detached Wayne to Georgia; but I believe his views do not extend beyond the mere possession of the country. It is said the Assemblies of the two invaded States are about meeting, to restore the administration of government. This will be a step to strengthening the hands of General Greene, and counteracting the future intrigues of the enemy. Many are sanguine in believing that all the southern posts will be evacuated, and that a fleet of transports is actually gone to bring the garrisons away. For my part, I have doubts upon the subject. My politics are, that while the present ministry can maintain their seats and procure supplies, they will prosecute the war on the mere chance of events; and that while this is the plan, they will not evacuate posts so essential as points of departure; from whence, on any favorable turn of affairs, to renew their attack on our most vulnerable side. Nor will they relinquish objects that would be so useful to them, should the worst happen in a final negotiation. Clinton, it is said, is cutting a canal across New York Island, through the low grounds, about a mile and a half from the city. This will be an addi-

tional obstacle; but if we have, otherwise, the necessary means to operate, it will not be an insurmountable one. I do not hear that he is constructing any other new works of consequence. To you, who are so thoroughly acquainted with the military posture of things in this country, I need not say that the activity of the next campaign must absolutely depend on effectual succors from France. I am convinced we shall have a powerful advocate in you. La Fayette, we know, will bring "the whole house" with him if he can.

There has been no material change in our internal situation since you left us. The capital successes we have had have served rather to increase the hopes than the exertions of the particular States. But in one respect we are in a mending way. Our financier has hitherto conducted himself with great ability, has acquired an entire personal confidence, revived in some measure the public credit, and is conciliating fast the support of the moneyed men. His operations have hitherto hinged chiefly on the seasonable aids from your country; but he is urging the establishment of permanent funds among ourselves; and though, from the nature and temper of our governments, his applications will meet with a dilatory compliance, it is to be hoped they will by degrees succeed.

The institution of a bank has been very serviceable to him; the commercial interest, finding great advantages in it, and anticipating much greater, is disposed to promote the plan; and nothing but moderate funds, permanently pledged for the security of lenders, is wanting to make it an engine of the most extensive and solid utility. By the last advices there is reason to believe the delinquent States will shortly comply with the requisition of Congress for a duty on our imports. This will be a great resource to Mr. Morris; but it will not alone be sufficient.

Upon the whole, however, if the war continues another year, it will be necessary that Congress should again recur to the generosity of France for pecuniary assistance. The

plans of the financier cannot be so matured as to enable us by any possibility to dispense with this; and if he should fail for want of support, we must replunge into that confusion and distress which had like to have proved fatal to us, and out of which we are slowly emerging. The cure, on a relapse, would be infinitely more difficult than ever.

I have given you an uninteresting but a faithful sketch of our situation. You may expect, from time to time, to receive from me the progress of our affairs; and I know you will over-pay me.

TO GENERAL GREENE.

ALBANY, October 12, 1782.

DEAR GENERAL:

It is an age since I have either written to you or received a line from you; yet I persuade myself you have not been the less convinced of my affectionate attachment and warm participation in all those events which have given you that place in your country's esteem and approbation which I have known you to deserve, while your enemies and rivals were most active in sullying your reputation.

You will perhaps learn before this reaches you that I have been appointed a member of Congress. I expect to go to Philadelphia in the ensuing month, where I shall be happy to correspond with you with our ancient confidence; and I shall entreat you not to confine your observations to military subjects, but to take in the whole scope of national concerns. I am sure your ideas will be useful to me and to the public.

I feel the deepest affliction at the news we have just received of the loss of our dear and estimable friend Laurens. His career of virtue is at an end. How strangely are human affairs conducted, that so many excellent qualities could not insure a more happy fate! The world will feel the loss of a man who has left few like him behind, and America of a citizen whose heart realized that patriotism of which others

only talk. I shall feel the loss of a friend I truly and most tenderly loved, and one of a very small number.

* * * * * * *

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

ALBANY, October 26, 1782.

SIR:

I am honored with your letters of the 5th, 15th, and 16th instant.

The detail you have been pleased to enter into in that of the 5th exhibits very cogent reasons for confining yourself to pretty large denominations of notes. Some of them had occurred to me, others had not; but I thought it my duty to state to you the operation which that circumstance had, as in the midst of the variety and extent of the objects which occupy your attention, you may not have so good opportunities of seeing the effect of your plans in detail. While I acknowledge that your observations have corrected my ideas upon the subject, and shown me that there would be danger in generally lessening the denominations of the paper issued, I should be uncandid not to add that it still appears to me there would be a preponderance of advantages in having a *part* of a smaller amount. I shall not trouble you at present with any further reasons for this opinion.

I have immediately on receipt of your letter taken measures for the publication of your advertisement in the newspapers of this State.

You will perceive by the inclosed cash account that, since my last, I have received five and twenty hundred dollars. This was procured in part of the loan I mentioned to you. It was chiefly paid to me in specie, and I have exchanged it with Col. Pickering and Mr. Duer for the notes; the latter had twelve hundred dollars. Taxes collect slowly, but I must shortly receive two or three hundred pounds more, of which Mr. Duer will have the principal benefit, as it appears by your letter to him, that you hoped he might receive three thousand dollars from me.

As I may shortly set out for Philadelphia, I wish to surrender to Mr. Tillotson, as soon as you think proper, the office in which he is to succeed.

TO LAFAYETTE.

ALBANY, Nov. 3, 1782.

Since we parted, my dear Marquis, at Yorktown, I have received three letters from you; one written on your way to Boston, two from France. I acknowledge that I have written to you only once, but the reason has been that I have been taught daily to expect your return. This I should not have done from my own calculations, for I saw no prospect but of an inactive campaign; and you had much better be intriguing for your hobby-horse at Paris than loitering away your time here. Yet they seem to be convinced at headquarters that you were certainly coming out; and by your letters it appears to have been your own expectation. I imagine you have relinquished it by this time.

I have been employed for the last ten months in rocking the cradle and studying the art of *fleecing* my neighbors. I am now a grave counsellor-at-law, and shall soon be a grave member of Congress. The Legislature, at their last session, took it into their heads to name me, pretty unanimously, one of their delegates.

I am going to throw away a few months more in public life, and then retire a simple citizen and good *pater familias*. I set out for Philadelphia in a few days. You see the disposition I am in. You are condemned to run the race of ambition all your life. I am already tired of the career, and dare to leave it.

But you would not give a pin for my letter unless politics or war made a part of it. You tell me they are employed in building *a peace*, and other accounts say it is nearly finished. I hope the work may meet with no interruptions. It is necessary for America, especially if your army is taken from us, as we are told will soon be the case. That was an

essential *point d'appui*, though money was the *primum mobile* of our finances, which must now lose the little activity lately given them. Our trade is prodigiously cramped. These States are in no humor for continuing exertions; if the war lasts it must be carried on by external succors. I make no apology for the inertness of this country. I detest it, but since it exists I am sorry to see other resources diminish.

Your ministers ought to know best what they are doing, but if the war goes on and the removal of the army does not prove an unwise measure, I renounce all future pretensions to judgment. I think, however, the circumstances of the enemy oblige them to peace.

We have been hoping that they would abandon their posts in these States. It no doubt was once in contemplation, but later appearances are rather ambiguous. I begin to suspect that if peace is not made, New York and Charleston—the former at least—will still be held.

There is no probability that I shall be one of the Commissioners of Peace. It is a thing I do not desire myself, and which I imagine other people will not desire.

Our army is now in excellent order, but small.

The temper we are in respecting the alliance, you will see from public acts. There never was a time of greater unanimity on that point.

I wish I durst enter into a greater detail with you, but our cipher is not fit for it, and I fear to trust it in another shape.

Is there any thing you wish on this side the water? You know the warmth and sincerity of my attachment. Command me.

I have not been so happy as to see Mr. De Segur. The title of your friend would have been a title to every thing in my power to manifest. Adieu.

General and Mrs. Schuyler and Mrs. Hamilton all join warmly in the most affectionate remembrances to you.

As to myself, I am in truth,

Yours *pour la vie.*

I wrote a long letter to the Viscount De Noailles, whom I also love. Has he received it? Is the worthy Gouvion well? Has he succeeded? How is it with our friend Gimat? How is it with General Du Portail? All those men are men of merit, and interest my best wishes.

Poor Laurens! He has fallen a sacrifice to his ardor in a trifling skirmish in South Carolina. You know how truly I loved him, and will judge how much I regret him.

I will write you again soon after my arrival at Philadelphia.

TO THE GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND.*

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 11, 1782.

SIR:

Congress are equally affected and alarmed by the information they have received that the Legislature of your State, at their last meeting, have refused their concurrence in establishing a duty on imports. They consider this measure as so indispensable to the prosecution of the war, that a sense of duty and regard to the common safety compel them to renew their efforts to engage a compliance with it. And in this view they have determined to send a deputation of three members to your State, as expressed in the inclosed resolution. The gentlemen they have appointed will be able to lay before you a full and just representation of public affairs, from which, they flatter themselves, will result a conviction of the propriety of their solicitude upon the present occasion. Convinced by past experience of the zeal and patriotism of the State of Rhode Island, they cannot doubt that it will yield to those urgent considerations which flow from a knowledge of our true situation.

They will only briefly observe that the increasing discontents of the army, the loud clamors of the public creditors, and the extreme disproportion between the public supplies and the demands of the public service, are so many invincible arguments for the fund recommended by Congress. They feel themselves unable to devise any other that will

* At this time William Greene.

be more efficacious, less exceptionable, or more generally agreeable; and if this is refused, they anticipate calamities of a most menacing nature—with this consolation, however, that they have faithfully discharged their trust, and that the mischiefs which follow cannot be attributed to them.

A principal object of the proposed fund is to *procure loans abroad.* If no security can be held out to lenders, the success of these must necessarily be very limited. The last accounts on the subject were not flattering; and when intelligence shall arrive in Europe that the State of Rhode Island has disagreed to the only fund which has yet been devised, there is every reason to apprehend it will have a fatal influence upon their future progress.

Deprived of this resource, our affairs must in all probability hasten to a dangerous crisis, and these States be involved in greater embarrassments than they have yet experienced, and from which it may be much more difficult to emerge. Congress will only add a request to your Excellency, that if the Legislature should not be sitting, it may be called together as speedily as possible, to enable the gentlemen whom they have deputed to perform the purpose of their mission.*

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 18, 1782.

DEAR SIR:

I shall very shortly be out of cash, and shall be much obliged to you to forward me the State allowance. It will answer as well in Mr. Morris' notes as specie, provided the notes have not more than a fortnight or so to run. It will be better if they are due. A disappointment in this will greatly embarrass me, and from what your Excellency said, I take it for granted it cannot happen. Nothing new except a probable account of the evacuation of Charleston.†

* This letter was written by Hamilton as one of the committee of Congress to whom the matter was referred.

† Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," iii., 7.

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 12, 1783.

SIR:

I am honored with your Excellency's letter of the 29th of December. I have received an order from Colonel Hay on Mr. Sands, which I have no doubt will shortly be paid. I have felt no inconvenience from not having the money sooner.

Since my last to you we have received no further accounts from Europe, so that we remain in the same uncertainty with respect to the negotiations for peace. Whether it will take place or not is a problem of difficult solution. The duplicity and unsteadiness for which Lord Shelburne is remarkable will not justify any confidence in his intentions; and the variety of interests to be conciliated in a treaty of peace, with the best dispositions on all sides, must render it a work of difficulty. I suspect too the Spaniards and the Dutch will have large demands.

We have now here a deputation from the army, and feel the mortification of a total disability to comply with their just expectations. If, however, the matter is taken up in a proper manner, I think their application may be turned to a good account. Every day proves more and more the insufficiency of the Confederation. The proselytes to this opinion are increasing fast, and many of the most sensible men acknowledge the wisdom of the measure recommended by your Legislature at their last sitting. Various circumstances conspire at this time to incline to the adoption of it, and I am not without hope it may erelong take place. But I am far from being sanguine.

We are deliberating on some mode for carrying that article of the Confederation into execution, which respects the valuation of lands, to ascertain the quotas of the several States. None has yet been proposed that appears to me eligible. I confess I dislike the principle altogether; but we are tied down by the Confederation.

The affairs of the Grants have been no further touched

since the resolutions transmitted to you. It is a business in which nobody cares to act with decision. As intimated before, I must doubt the perseverance of Congress, if military coercion should become necessary. I am clear the only chance the Legislature have for a recovery of any part of the revolted territory is by a compromise with New Hampshire, and this compromise must originate between the States themselves. I hope the Legislature will revise the late act for confirming the possessions of those who hold lands in that country. I am certain there are doubts upon the subject, and it were much to be wished such doubts did not exist. The present dissatisfaction of the army is much opposed to any experiment of force in a service where scruples of interest or prejudice may operate.*

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 7, 1783.

SIR:

Flattering myself that your knowledge of me will induce you to receive the observations I make, as dictated by a regard to the public good, I take the liberty to suggest to you my ideas on some matters of delicacy and importance. I view the present juncture as a very interesting one. I need not observe how far the temper and situation of the army make it so. The state of our finances was perhaps never more critical. I am under injunctions which will not permit me to disclose some facts that would at once demonstrate this position; but I think it probable you will be possessed of them through another channel. It is, however, certain that there has scarcely been a period of the Revolution which called more for wisdom and decision in Congress. Unfortunately for us, we are a body not governed by reason or foresight, but by circumstances. It is probable we shall not take the proper measures; and if we do not, a few months may open an embarrassing scene. This will be the case whether we have peace or a continuance of the war.

* Now first printed from the Clinton papers at Albany.

If the war continues, it would seem that the army must, in June, subsist itself, *to defend the country.* If peace should take place, it *will* subsist itself, *to procure justice to itself.* It appears to be a prevailing opinion in the army that the disposition to recompense their services will cease with the necessity for them, and that, if they once lay down their arms, they part with the means of obtaining justice. It is to be lamented that appearances afford too much ground for their distrust.

It becomes a serious inquiry: What is the true line of policy? The claims of the army, urged with moderation, but with firmness, may operate on those weak minds which are influenced by their apprehensions more than by their judgments, so as to produce a concurrence in the measures which the exigencies of affairs demand. They may add weight to the applications of Congress to the several States. So far a useful turn may be given to them. But the difficulty will be to keep a *complaining* and *suffering army* within the bounds of moderation.

This your Excellency's influence must effect. In order to do it, it will be advisable not to discountenance their endeavors to procure redress, but rather, by the intervention of confidential and prudent persons, *to take the direction of them.* This, however, must not appear. It is of moment to the public tranquillity, that your Excellency should preserve the confidence of the army without losing that of the people. This will enable you, in case of extremity, to guide the current, and to bring order, perhaps even good, out of confusion. 'T is a part that requires address; but 't is one which your own situation, as well as the welfare of the community, points out.

I will not conceal from your Excellency a truth which it is necessary you should know. An idea is propagated in the army that delicacy, carried to an extreme, prevents your espousing its interests with sufficient warmth. The falsehood of this opinion no one can be better acquainted with than myself, but it is not the less mischievous for

being false. Its tendency is to impair that influence which you may exert with advantage, should any commotions unhappily ensue, to moderate the pretensions of the army, and make their conduct correspond with their duty.

The great *desideratum* at present is the establishment of general funds, which alone can do justice to the creditors of the United States (of whom the army forms the most meritorious class), restore public credit, and supply the future wants of government. This is the object of all men of sense. In this the influence of the army, properly directed, may co-operate.

The intimations I have thrown out will suffice to give your Excellency a proper conception of my sentiments. You will judge of their reasonableness or fallacy, but I persuade myself you will do justice to my motives. General Knox has the confidence of the army, and is a man of sense. I think he may be safely made use of. Situated as I am, your Excellency will feel the confidential nature of these observations.

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

February 24, 1783.

SIR:

In my letter of the 14th I informed your Excellency that Congress were employed in devising a plan for carrying the eighth article of the Confederation into execution. This business is at length brought to a conclusion. I enclose, for the information of the Legislature, the proceedings upon it in different stages, by which they will see the part I have acted. But as I was ultimately left in a small minority, I think it my duty to explain the motives upon which my opposition to the general course of the House was founded.

I am of opinion that the article of the Confederation itself was ill-judged. In the first place I do not believe there is any general representative of the wealth of a nation, the criterion of its ability to pay taxes. There are only two that can be thought of—*land* and *numbers*.

The revenues of the United Provinces (general and particular) were computed, before the present war, to more than half as much as those of Great Britain. The extent of their territory is not one fourth part as great, their population less than a third. The comparison is still more striking between those Provinces and the Swiss Cantons, in both of which extent of territory and population are nearly the same, and yet the revenues of the former are five times as large as those of the latter; nor could any efforts of taxation bring them to any thing like a level. In both cases the advantages for agriculture are superior in those countries which afford least revenue in proportion. I have selected these examples because they are most familiar, but whoever will extend the comparison between the different nations of the world will perceive that the position I have laid down is supported by universal experience.

The truth is, the ability of a country to pay taxes depends on infinite combinations of physical and moral causes which can never be accommodated to any general rule—climate, soil, productions, advantages for navigation, government, genius of the people, progress of arts and industry, and an endless variety of circumstances. The diversities are sufficiently great in these States to make an infinite difference in their relative wealth, the proportion of which can never be found by any common measure whatever.

The only possible way, then, of making them contribute to the general expense in an equal proportion to their means, is by general taxes imposed under Continental authority.

In this mode there would no doubt be inequalities, and, for a considerable time, material ones, but experience, and the constant operation of a general interest, which, by the very collision of particular interests, must, in the main, prevail in a Continental deliberative, would at length correct those inequalities, and balance one tax that should bear hard upon one State by another that should have proportional weight in others. This idea, however, was not, at the period of framing the Confederation, and is not yet, agreeable to

the spirit of the time. To futurity we must leave the discovery how far this spirit is wise or foolish. One thing only is now certain: that Congress, having the discretionary power of determining the quantum of money to be paid into the general treasury towards defraying the common expenses, have in effect the constitutional power of general taxation.

The restraints upon the exercise of this power amount to the perpetuating a rule for fixing the proportions, which must of necessity produce inequality, and by refusing the Federal Government a power of specific taxation and of collection, without substituting any other adequate means of coercion, do, in fact, leave the compliance with Continental requisitions to the good-will of the respective States. Inequality is inherent in the theory of the Confederation, and, in the practice, that inequality must increase in proportion to the honesty or dishonesty of the component parts. This vice will either, in its consequences, reform the Federal Constitution or dissolve it.

If a general standard must be fixed, numbers were preferable to land. Modes might be devised to ascertain the former with tolerable precision; but I am persuaded the experiment will prove that the value of all the land in each State cannot be ascertained with any thing like exactness. Both these measures have the common disadvantage of being no equal representative of the wealth of the people, but one is much more simple, definite, and certain than the other.

I have indulged myself in these remarks to show that I have little expectation of success from any mode of carrying the article in question into execution upon equitable principles. I owe it, however, to myself to declare that my opposition did not arise from this source. The Confederation has pointed out this mode, and, though I would heartily join in a representation of the difficulties (of which every man of sense must be sensible on examination) that occur in the execution of the plan to induce the States to consent

to a change, yet, as this was not the disposition of a majority of Congress, I would have assented to any mode of attempting it, which was not either obviously mischievous or impracticable.

The first plan proposed, as your Excellency will see, was an actual valuation of each State by itself. This was evidently making the interested party judge in his own cause. Those who have seen the operation of this principle between the counties in the same State, and the districts in the same county, cannot doubt a moment that the valuations on this plan would have been altogether unequal and unjust. Without supposing more liberality in one State than another, the degree of care, judgment, and method employed in the execution would alone make extreme differences in the results.

This mode had also the further inconvenience of awakening all the jealousies of the several States against each other. Each would suspect that its neighbor had favored itself, whether the partiality appeared or not. It would be impossible to silence these distrusts and to make the States sit down satisfied with the justice of each other. Every new requisition for money would be a new signal for discussion and clamor, and the seeds of disunion, already sown too thick, would not be a little multiplied.

To guard against these evils the plan proposes a revision by Congress; but it is easy to be seen that such a power could not be exercised. Should any States return defective valuations it would be difficult to find sufficient evidence to determine them such. To alter would not be admissible, for Congress could have no data which could be presumed equivalent to those which must have governed the judgment of commissioners under oath, or an actual view of the premises. To do either this or to reject would be an impeachment of the honor of the States, which it is not probable there would be decision enough to hazard, and which, if done, could not fail to excite serious disgusts. There is a wide difference between a single State exercising such a

power over its own counties and a confederated government exercising it over sovereign States which compose the Confederacy. It might also happen that too many States would be interested in the defective valuations to leave a sufficient number willing either to alter or to reject.

These considerations prevailed to prevent the plan being adopted by the majority.

The last plan may be less mischievous than the first, but it appears to me altogether ineffectual. The mere quantity of land granted and surveyed, with the general species of buildings upon them, can certainly be no criteria to determine their value. The plan does not even distinguish the improved from the unimproved land, the qualities of soil or degrees of improvement; the qualities of the houses and other buildings are entirely omitted. These, it seems, are to be judged by the commissioners to be appointed by each State. But I am unable to conceive how any commissioner can form the least estimate of these circumstances with respect even to his own State, much less with respect to other States, which would be necessary to establish a just relative value. If even there was a distinction of improved from unimproved land, by supposing an intrinsic value in the land and adopting general rates, something nearer the truth might be attained; but it must now be all conjecture and uncertainty.

The numbers of inhabitants, distinguishing white from black, are called for. This is not only totally foreign to the Confederation, but can answer no reasonable purpose. It has been said that the proportion of numbers may guide and correct the estimates. An assertion, purely verbal, *has no meaning*. A judgment must first be formed of the value of the lands upon some principles. If this should be altered by the proportion of numbers, it is plain numbers would be substituted to land.

Another objection to this plan is that it lets in the particular interests of the States to operate in the returns of the quantities of land, number of buildings, and number of in-

habitants. But the principle of this objection applies less forcibly here than against the former plan.

Whoever will consider the plain import of the eighth article of the Confederation must be convinced that it intended an *actual* and *specific* valuation of land, buildings, and improvements,—not a mere general estimate, according to the present plan. While we insist, therefore, upon adhering to the Confederation, we should do it in reality, not barely in appearance.

Many of those who voted for this scheme had as bad an opinion of it as myself, but they were induced to accede to it by a persuasion that some plan for the purpose was expected by the States, and that none better, in the present circumstances of the country, could be fallen upon.

A leading rule which I have laid down for the direction of my conduct is this, that, while I would have a just deference for the expectations of the States, I would never consent to amuse them by attempts which must either fail in the execution or be productive of evil. I would rather incur the negative inconveniences of delay than the positive mischiefs of injudicious expedients. A contrary conduct serves to destroy confidence in the government, the greatest misfortune that can befall a nation. There should, in my opinion, be a character of wisdom and efficiency in all the measures of the Federal Council, the opposite of a spirit of temporizing concession.

I would have sufficient reliance on the judgments of the several States to hope that good reasons for not attempting a thing would be more satisfactory to them than precipitate and fruitless attempts.

My idea is that, taking it for granted the States will expect an experiment on the principle of the Confederation, the best plan will be to make it by commissioners, appointed by Congress, and acting under their authority. Congress might, in the first instance, appoint three or more of the principal characters in each State for probity and abilities, with a power to nominate other commissioners

under them in each subdivision of the State. General principles might be laid down for the regulation of their conduct, by which uniformity in the manner of conducting the business would obtain. Sanctions of such solemnity might be prescribed and such notoriety given to every part of the transaction, that the commissioners could neither be careless nor partial without a sacrifice of reputation.

To carry this plan, however, into effect, with sufficient care and accuracy, would be a work both of time and expense; and, unfortunately, we are so pressed to find money for calls of immediate necessity, that we could not at present undertake a measure which would require so large a sum.

To me it appears evident that every part of a business which is of so important and universal concern should be transacted on uniform principles and under the direction of that *body* which has a common interest.

In general, I regard the present moment, probably the dawn of peace, as peculiarly critical, and the measures which it shall produce as of great importance to the future welfare of these States. I am therefore scrupulously cautious of assenting to plans which appear to me founded on false principles.

Your Excellency will observe that the valuation of the lands is to be the standard for adjusting the accounts for past supplies between the United States and the particular States. This, if adhered to without allowance for the circumstances of those States which have been more immediately the theatre of the war, will charge our State for the past according to its *future ability* when in an entire condition, if the valuation should be made after we regain possession of the parts of the State now in the power of the enemy.

I have therefore introduced a motion for repeating the call, in a more earnest manner, upon the States to vest Congress with a power of making equitable abatements, agreeably to the spirit of the resolution of the 20th of February

last, which few of the States have complied with. This motion has been committed. I know not what will be its fate.

Notwithstanding the opposition I have given, now the matter has been decided in Congress I hope the State will cheerfully comply with what is required. Unless each State is governed by this principle, there is an end to the Union. Every State will, no doubt, have a right in this case to accompany its compliance with such remarks as it may think proper. After the plan was agreed upon it was committed to be put into form, and when reported, instead of commissioners, an alteration was carried for making the estimate by a grand committee.

February 27th.

Mr. Morris has signified to Congress his resolution to resign by the 1st of June if adequate funds are not by that time provided. This will be a severe stroke to our affairs. No man fit for the office will be willing to supply his place, for the very reason he resigns.

'T is happy for us we have reasons to expect a peace. I am sorry that, by different accounts, it appears not to have been concluded late in December.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 5, 1783.

SIR:

I had the honor of writing to your Excellency lately on a very confidential subject, and shall be anxious to know, as soon as convenient, whether the letter got safe to hand.

The bearer, Shattuck, thinks he can point out means of apprehending Wells and Knowlton,* the two persons whom

* November 27, 1782, Congress directed Washington to apprehend and secure Luke Knowlton of Newfane and Samuel Wells of Brattleborough, in the New Hampshire Grants, for being in a dangerous correspondence and intercourse with the enemy. This affair probably grew out of the trouble between New York and New Hampshire, and the inhabitants of what is now Vermont. There was a party among the people there which was said to aim at a union with the British provinces.

your Excellency was authorized to have taken into custody. I have desired him to call upon you to disclose the plan.

I will not trouble your Excellency with any observation on the importance of getting hold of those persons.

The surmise that Mr. Arnold,* a member of Congress, gave intelligence to them of the design to take them, makes it peculiarly important.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 17, 1783.

SIR:

I am duly honored with your Excellency's letters of the 4th and 12th instant. It is much to be regretted, though not to be wondered at, that steps of so inflammatory a tendency have been taken in the army. Your Excellency has, in my opinion, acted wisely. The best way is ever not to attempt to stem a torrent, but to divert it.

I am happy to find you coincide in opinion with me on the conduct proper to be observed by yourself. I am persuaded more and more it is that which is most consistent with your own reputation and the public safety.

Our affairs wear a most serious aspect, as well foreign as domestic. Before this gets to hand your Excellency will probably have seen the provisional articles between Great Britain and these States. It might at first appearance be concluded that these will be the prelude to a general peace, but there are strong reasons to doubt the truth of such a conclusion. Obstacles may arise from different quarters: from the demands of Spain and Holland; from the hope in France of greater acquisitions in the East; and perhaps still more probably, from the insincerity and duplicity of Lord Shelburne, whose politics, founded in the peculiarity of his situation, as well as in the character of the man, may well be suspected of insidiousness. I am really apprehensive if

* Jonathan Arnold, delegate from Rhode Island, but a resident of Vermont. He was not re-elected to Congress, but there is no means of knowing whether Hamilton's suspicions were correct.

peace does not take place that the negotiations will tend to sow distrust among the allies and weaken the force of the common league. We have, I fear, men among us, and men in trust, who have a hankering after British connection. We have others whose confidence in France savors of credulity. The intrigues of the former and the incautiousness of the latter may be both, though in different degrees, injurious to the American interests, and make it difficult for prudent men to steer a proper course.

There are delicate circumstances with respect to the late foreign transactions, which I am not at liberty to reveal, but which, joined to our internal weaknesses, disorders, follies, and prejudices, make this country stand upon precarious ground.

Some use, perhaps, may be made of these ideas to induce moderation in the army. An opinion that their country does not stand upon a secure footing will operate upon the patriotism of the officers against hazarding any domestic commotions.

When I make these observations I cannot forbear adding that if no excesses take place I shall not be sorry that ill-humors have appeared. I shall not regret importunity, if temperate, from the army.

There are good intentions in the majority of Congress, but there is not sufficient wisdom or decision. There are dangerous prejudices in the particular States opposed to those measures which alone can give stability and prosperity to the Union. There is a fatal opposition to Continental views. Necessity alone can work a reform. But how produce that necessity, how apply it, and how keep it within salutary bounds? I fear we have been contending for a shadow.

The affair of accounts I considered as having been put on a satisfactory footing. The particular States have been required to settle till the first of August, '80, and the Superintendent of Finance has been directed to take measures for settling since that period. I shall immediately see him on the subject.

We have had eight States and a half in favor of a commutation of the half pay for an average of ten years' purchase —that is, five years' full pay instead of half pay for life, which, on a calculation of annuities, is nearly an equivalent. I hope this will now shortly take place.

We have made considerable progress in a plan to be recommended to the several States for funding all the public debts, including those of the army, which is certainly the only way to restore public credit and enable us to continue the war by borrowing abroad, if it should be necessary to continue it.

I omitted mentioning to your Excellency that, from European intelligence, there is great reason to believe, at all events—peace or war,—New York will be evacuated in the spring. It will be a pity if any domestic disturbances should change the plans of the British court.

P. S.—Your Excellency mentions that it has been surmised the plan in agitation was formed in Philadelphia, that combinations have been talked of between the public creditors and the army, and that members of Congress had encouraged the idea. This is partly true. I have myself urged in Congress the propriety of uniting the influence of the public creditors, and the army as a part of them, to prevail upon the States to enter into their views. I have expressed the same sentiments out-of-doors. Several other members of Congress have done the same. The meaning, however, of all this was simply that Congress should adopt such a plan as would embrace the relief of all the public creditors, including the army, in order that the personal influence of some, the connections of others, and a sense of justice to the army, as well as the apprehension of ill consequences, might form a mass of influence in each State in favor of the measures of Congress. In this view, as I mentioned to your Excellency in a former letter, I thought the discontents of the army might be turned to a good account. I am still of opinion that their earnest but respectful applications for re-

dress will have a good effect. As to any combination of *force*, it would only be productive of the horrors of a civil war, might end in the ruin of the country, and would certainly end in the ruin of the army.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 24, 1783.

SIR:

Your Excellency will, before this reaches you, have received a letter from the Marquis de Lafayette, informing you that the preliminaries of peace between all the belligerent powers have been concluded. I congratulate your Excellency on this happy conclusion of your labors. It now only remains to make solid establishments within, to perpetuate our Union, to prevent our being a ball in the hands of European powers, bandied against each other at their pleasure; in fine, to make our independence truly a blessing. This, it is to be lamented, will be an arduous work; for, to borrow a figure from mechanics, the centrifugal is much stronger than the centripetal force in these States,—the seeds of disunion much more numerous than those of union.

I will add that your Excellency's exertions are as essential to accomplish this end as they have been to establish independence. I will upon a future occasion open myself upon this subject.

Your conduct in the affair of the officers is highly pleasing here. The measures of the army are such as I could have wished them, and will add new lustre to their character as well as strengthen the hands of Congress.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 25, 1783.

SIR:

I wrote to your Excellency a day or two ago by express. Since that, a committee, appointed on the communications from you, have had a meeting, and find themselves embar

rassed. They have requested me to communicate our embarrassments to you in confidence, and to ask your private opinion. The army, by their resolutions, express an expectation that Congress will not disband them previous to a settlement of accounts and the establishment of funds. Congress may resolve upon the first, but the general opinion is that they cannot constitutionally declare the second. They have no right, by the Confederation, to *demand* funds —they can only recommend—and to determine that the army shall be continued in service till the States grant them, would be to determine that the whole present army shall be a standing army during peace, unless the States comply with the requisition for funds. This, it is supposed, would excite the alarm and jealousies of the States, and increase, rather than lessen, the opposition to the funding scheme. It is also observed that the longer the army is kept together the more the payment of past dues is procrastinated, the abilities of the States being exhausted for their immediate support, and a new debt every day incurred. It is further suggested that there is danger in keeping the army together in a state of inactivity, and that a separation of the several lines would facilitate the settlement of accounts, diminish present expense, and avoid the danger of union. It is added that the officers of each line, being on the spot, might, by their own solicitations and those of their friends, forward the adoption of funds in the different States.

A proposition will be transmitted to you by Colonel Bland, in the form of a resolution to be adopted by Congress, framed upon the principles of the foregoing reasoning.

Another proposition is contained in the following resolution:

"That the Commander-in-Chief be informed it is the intention of Congress to effect the settlement of the accounts of the respective lines previous to their reduction, and that Congress are doing, and will continue to do, every thing in their power towards procuring satisfactory securities for what shall be found due on such settlement."

The scope of this your Excellency will perceive without comment.

I am to request you will favor me with your sentiments on both the propositions, and in general with your ideas of what had best be done with reference to the expectation expressed by the officers; taking into view the situation of Congress. On one side the army expect they will not be disbanded till accounts are settled and funds established. On the other hand, they have no constitutional power of doing any thing more than to recommend funds, and are persuaded that these will meet with mountains of prejudice in some of the States.

A considerable progress has been made in a plan for funding the public debts, and it is to be hoped it will erelong go forth to the States, with every argument that can give it success.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, March 25, 1783.

SIR:

The inclosed * I write more in a public than in a private capacity. Here I write as a citizen zealous for the true happiness of this country; as a soldier who feels what is due to an army which has suffered every thing and done much for the safety of America.

I sincerely wish *ingratitude* was not so natural to the human heart as it is. I sincerely wish there were no seeds of it in those who direct the councils of the United States. But while I urge the army to moderation, and advise your Excellency to take the direction of their discontents, and endeavor to confine them within the bounds of duty, I cannot, as an honest man, conceal from you that I am afraid their distrusts have too much foundation. Republican jealousy has in it a principle of hostility to an army, whatever be their merits, whatever be their claims to the gratitude of the community. It acknowledges their services

* The "inclosed" is the preceding letter.

with unwillingness, and rewards them with reluctance. I see this temper, though smothered with great care, involuntarily breaking out upon too many occasions. I often feel a mortification, which it would be impolitic to express, that sets my passions at variance with my reason. Too many, I perceive, if they could do it with safety or color, would be glad to elude the just pretensions of the army. I hope this is not the prevailing disposition.

But supposing the country ungrateful, what can the army do? It must submit to its hard fate. To seek redress by its arms would end in its ruin. The army would moulder by its own weight, and for want of the means of keeping together the soldiers would abandon their officers; there would be no chance of success without having recourse to means that would reverse our revolution. I make these observations, not that I imagine your Excellency can want motives to continue your influence in the path of moderation, but merely to show why I cannot myself enter into the views of coercion which some gentlemen entertain, for I confess, could force avail, I should almost wish to see it employed. I have an indifferent opinion of the honesty of this country, and ill forebodings as to its future system.

Your Excellency will perceive I have written with sensations of chagrin, and will make allowance for coloring, but the general picture is too true. God send us all more wisdom.

TO WASHINGTON.

April, 1783.

SIR:

I have received your Excellency's letters of the thirty-first of March and fourth of April, the last to day. The one to Colonel Bland, as member of the committee, has been read in committee confidentially, and gave great satisfaction. The idea of not attempting to separate the army before the settlement of accounts, corresponds with my proposition. That of endeavoring to let them have some pay, had also appeared to me indispensable. The expecta-

tions of the army, as represented by your Excellency, are moderation itself. To-morrow we confer with the Superintendent of Finance on the subject of money. There will be difficulty, but not, we hope, insurmountable.

I thank your Excellency for the hints you are so obliging as to give me in your private letter. I do not wonder at the suspicions that have been infused; nor should I be surprised to hear that I have been pointed out as one of the persons concerned in playing the game described. But facts must speak for themselves. The gentlemen who were here from the army, and General McDougal who is still here, will be able to give a true account of those who have supported the just claims of the army, and of those who have endeavored to elude them.

There are two classes of men, sir, in Congress, of very different views: one attached to State, the other to Continental, politics. The latter have been strenuous advocates for funding the public debt upon solid securities; the former have given every opposition in their power, and have only been dragged into the measures which are now near being adopted, by the clamors of the army and other public creditors.

The advocates for Continental funds have blended the interests of the army with other creditors, from a conviction that no funds for partial purposes will go through those States to whose citizens the United States are largely indebted; or, if they should be carried through, from impressions of the moment, would have the necessary stability, for the influence of those unprovided for would always militate against a provision for others in exclusion of them. It is in vain to tell men who have parted with a large part of their property on the public faith, that the services of the army are entitled to a preference; they would reason from their interest and their feelings; these would tell them that they had as great a title as any other class of the community to public justice, and that while this was denied to them it would be unreasonable to make them bear their part of a

burthen for the benefit of others. This is the way they would reason; and as their influence in some of the States was considerable, they would have been able to prevent any partial provision.

But the question was not merely how to do justice to the creditors, but how to restore public credit. Taxation in this country, it was found, would not supply a sixth part of the public necessities. The loans in Europe were far short of the balance, and the prospect every day diminishing: the Court of France telling us in plain terms she could not even do as much as she had done; individuals in Holland, and everywhere else, refusing to part with their money on the precarious tenure of the mere faith of this country, without any pledge for the payment either of principal or interest.

In this situation what was to be done? It was essential to our cause that vigorous efforts should be made to restore public credit; it was necessary to combine all the motives to this end that could operate upon different descriptions of persons in the different States; the necessities and discontents of the army presented themselves as a powerful engine.

But, sir, these gentlemen would be puzzled to support their insinuations by a single fact. It was, indeed, proposed to appropriate the intended impost on trade to the army debt; and, what was extraordinary, by gentlemen who had expressed their dislike to the principle of the fund. I acknowledge I was one that opposed this, for the reasons already assigned and for these additional ones. *That* was the fund on which we most counted; to obtain further loans in Europe, it was necessary we should have a fund sufficient to pay the interest of what had been borrowed and what was to be borrowed. The truth was, these people, in this instance, wanted to play off the army against the funding system.

As to Mr. Morris, I will give your Excellency a true explanation of his conduct. He had been for some time press-

ing Congress to endeavor to obtain funds, and had found a great backwardness in the business. He found the taxes unproductive in the different States; he found the loans in Europe making a very slow progress; he found himself pressed on all hands for supplies; he found himself, in short, reduced to this alternative: either of making engagements which he could not fulfil, or declaring his resignation in case funds were not established by a given time. Had he followed the first course, the bubble must soon have burst; he must have sacrificed his credit and his character, and public credit, already in a ruinous condition, would have lost its last support.

He wisely judged it better to resign. This might increase the embarrassments of the moment; but the necessity of the case, it was to be hoped, would produce the proper measures; and he might then resume the direction of the machine with advantage and success.

He also had some hope that his resignation would prove a stimulus to Congress.

He was, however, ill advised in the publication of his letters of resignation. This was an imprudent step, and has given a handle to his personal enemies, who, by playing upon the passions of others, have drawn some well-meaning men into the cry against him. But Mr. Morris certainly deserves a great deal from his country. I believe no man in this country but himself could have kept the money machine a-going during the period he has been in office. From every thing that appears, his administration has been upright as well as able.

The truth is, the old leaven of Deane and Lee is, at this day, working against Mr. Morris. He happened, in that dispute, to have been on the side of Deane; and certain men can never forgive him. A man whom I once esteemed, and whom I will rather suppose *duped* than wicked, is the second actor in this business.

The matter with respect to the army which has occasioned most altercation in Congress and most dissatisfaction in the

army, has been the half-pay. The opinions on this head have been two: one party was for referring the several lines to their States, to make such commutation as they should think proper; the other, for making the commutation by Congress, and funding it on Continental security. I was of this last opinion, and so were all those who will be represented as having made use of the army as puppets. Our principal reasons were: *Firstly*, by referring the lines to their respective States, those which were opposed to the half-pay would have taken advantage of the officers' necessities to make the commutation far short of an equivalent. *Secondly*, the inequality which would have arisen in the different States when the officers came to compare (as has happened in other cases), would have been a new source of discontent. *Thirdly*, such a reference was a continuance of the old wretched State system, by which the ties between Congress and the army have been nearly dissolved, by which the resources of the States have been diverted from the common treasury and wasted—a system which your Excellency has often justly reprobated.

I have gone into these details to give you a just idea of the parties in Congress. I assure you, upon my honor, sir, I have given you a candid state of facts, to the best of my judgment. The men against whom the suspicions you mention must be directed, are in general the most sensible, the most liberal, the most independent, and the most respectable characters in our body, as well as the most unequivocal friends to the army. In a word, they are the men who think continentally.

I am chairman of a committee for peace arrangements. We shall ask your Excellency's opinion at large on a proper military peace establishment. I will just hint to your Excellency, that your prejudices will make us wish to keep up as few troops as possible.

We this moment learn an officer is arrived from Sir Guy Carleton with dispatches, probably official accounts of peace.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 9, 1783.

SIR:

Congress having appointed a committee consisting of Messrs. Madison, Osgood, Wilson, Elsworth, and myself, to consider what arrangements it will be proper to adopt in the different departments with reference to a peace, I am directed by the committee to address your Excellency on the subject of the military department.

The committee wish your Excellency's sentiments at large on such institutions of every kind for the interior defence of these States as may be best adapted to their circumstances, and conciliate security with economy and with the principles of our government. In this they will be glad if you will take as great latitude as you may think necessary, and will therefore omit entering into any details.

The committee apprehend it to be the intention of Congress to lay down a general plan, to be carried into execution as circumstances will permit, and that in attending to such dispositions as the immediate situation of the country may require, they are chiefly desirous of establishing good principles that will have a permanent salutary operation.*

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 15, 1783.

SIR:

There are two resolutions passed relative to the restoration of the British prisoners, and to making arrangements for the surrender of the posts in the possession of the British troops; the first of which is to be transacted by you in conjunction with the Secretary of War, the latter by yourself alone. I will explain to you some doubts which have arisen in Congress with regard to the true construction of the provisional treaty, which may be of use to you in transacting the business above mentioned.

The sixth article declares that there shall be no future confiscations, etc., after the *ratification of the treaty in America,*

* Now first printed from the Knox papers.

and the seventh article makes the surrender of prisoners, evacuation of posts, cessation of hostilities, etc., to depend on that event, to wit, *the ratification of the treaty in America.*

Now the doubt is, whether *the treaty* means the provisional treaty *already concluded*, or the *definitive* treaty *to be concluded.* The last construction is most agreeable to the letter of the provisional articles, the former most agreeable to the usual practice of nations, for hostilities commonly cease on the ratification of the preliminary treaty.

There is a great diversity of opinion in Congress. It will be, in my opinion, advisable, at the same time that we do not communicate our doubts to the British, to extract their sense of the matter from them.

This may be done by asking them at what periods they are willing to stipulate the surrender of posts, at the same time that they are asked in what manner it will be the most convenient to them to receive the prisoners.

If they postpone the evacuation of the different posts to the definitive treaty, we shall then be justified in doing the same with respect to prisoners. The question will then arise, whether, on principles of humanity, economy, and liberality, we ought not to restore the prisoners, at all events, without delay? Much may be said on both sides. I doubt the expedience of a total restoration of prisoners till they are willing to fix the epochs at which they will take leave of us. It will add considerably to their strength, and accidents, though improbable, may happen.

I confess, however, I am not clear in my opinion.

The provisional or preliminary treaty is ratified by us—for the greater caution.

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 14, 1783.

SIR:

The President of Congress will of course have transmitted to your Excellency the plan lately adopted by Congress for funding the public debt. This plan was framed to accom-

modate it to the objections of some of the States, but this spirit of accommodation will only serve to render it less efficient without making it more palatable. The opposition of the State of Rhode Island, for instance, is chiefly founded upon these two considerations: the merchants are opposed to any revenue from trade; and the State, depending almost wholly on commerce, wants to have credit for the amount of the duties.

Persuaded that the plan now proposed will have little more chance of success than a better one, and that, if agreed to by all the States, it will in a great measure fail in the execution, it received my negative. My principal objections were:

First, that it does not designate the funds (except the impost) on which the whole interest is to arise, and by which (selecting the capital articles of visible property) the collection would have been easy, the funds productive, and necessarily increasing with the increase of the country.

Second, that the duration of the funds is not co-extensive with the debt, but limited to twenty-five years, though there is a moral certainty that in that period the principal will not by the present provision be fairly extinguished.

Third, that the nomination and appointment of the collectors of the revenue are to reside in the State, instead of at least the nomination being in the United States; the consequence of which will be that those States which have little interest in the funds, by having a small share of the public debt due to their own citizens, will take care to appoint such persons as are least likely to collect the revenue.

The evils resulting from these defects will be that in many instances the objects of the revenues will be improperly chosen, and will consist of a multitude of little articles, which will, on experiment, prove insufficient; that for want of a vigorous collection in each State the revenue will be unproductive in many, and will fall chiefly upon those States which are governed by most liberal principles; that for want of an adequate security the evidences of the

public debt will not be transferable for any thing like their value; that this not admitting an incorporation of the creditors in the nature of banks, will deprive the public of the benefit of an increased circulation, and of course will disable the people from paying the taxes for want of a sufficient medium.

I shall be happy to be mistaken in my apprehensions, but the experiment must determine.

I hope our State will consent to the plan proposed, because it is her interest at all events to promote the payment of the public debt on Continental funds (independent of the general considerations of union and propriety).

I am much mistaken if the debts due from the United States to the citizens of the State of New York do not considerably exceed its proportion of the necessary funds; of course, it has an immediate interest that there should be a Continental provision for them. But there are superior motives that ought to operate in every State—the obligations of national faith, honor, and reputation.

Individuals have been already too long sacrificed to public convenience. It will be shocking, and, indeed, an eternal reproach to this country, if we begin the peaceable enjoyment of our independence by a violation of all the principles of honesty and true policy.

It is worthy of remark that at least four fifths of the domestic debt are due to the citizens of the States, from Pennsylvania, inclusively, northward.

P. S.—It is particularly interesting that the State should have a representation here. Not only matters are depending which require a full representation in Congress, and there is now a thin one, but those matters are of a nature so particularly interesting to our State, that we ought not to be without a voice in them. I wish two other gentlemen of the delegation may appear as soon as possible, for it would be very injurious for me to remain much longer here. Having no future views in public life, I owe it to myself without delay to enter upon the care of my private concerns in earnest.

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 1, 1783.

SIR:

In my last letter to your Excellency I took occasion to mention that it was of great importance to the State at this time to have a representation here, as points in which, by its present situation, it is particularly interested are daily and will be daily agitated.

It is also of importance at this moment to the United States (not only from general considerations, but) because we have a very thin representation in Congress, and are frequently unable to transact any of those matters which require nine States. I wish your Excellency would urge a couple of gentlemen to come on, as it becomes highly inconvenient to me to remain here, and as I have stayed the full time to be expected.

I observe with great regret the intemperate proceedings among the people in different parts of the State, in violation of a treaty, the faithful observance of which so deeply interests the United States.

Surely the State of New York, with its capital and its frontier posts (on which its important fur trade depends), in the hands of the British troops, ought to take care that nothing is done to furnish a pretext on the other side, even for delaying, much less for refusing, the execution of the treaty. We may imagine that the situation of Great Britain puts her under a necessity, at all events, of fulfilling her engagements and cultivating the good-will of this country.

This is, no doubt, her true policy: but when we feel that passion makes us depart from the dictates of reason; when we have seen that passion has had so much influence in the conduct of the British councils in the whole course of the war; when we recollect that those who govern them are men like ourselves, and alike subject to passions and resentments; when we reflect also that all the great men in England are not united in the liberal scheme of policy with respect to this country, and that in the anarchy which prevails there is no

knowing to whom the reins of government may be committed; when we recollect how little in a condition we are to force a compliance with our claims, we ought certainly to be cautious in what manner we act, especially when we in particular have so much at stake, and should not openly provoke a breach of faith on the other side by setting the example.

An important distinction is not sufficiently attended to. The fifth article is recommendatory; the sixth, positive. There is no option on the part of the particular States as to any future confiscations, prosecutions, or injuries of any kind, to person, liberty, or property, on account of any thing done in the war. It is matter of discretion in the States whether they will comply with the recommendations contained in the fifth article; but no part of the sixth can be departed from by them without a direct breach of public faith and of the Confederation. The power of making treaties is exclusively lodged in Congress. That power includes whatever is essential to the termination of the war and to the preservation of the general safety. Indemnity to individuals in similar cases is a *usual* stipulation in treaties of peace, of which many precedents are to be produced.

Should it be said that the associations of the people, without legal authority, do not amount to a breach of the public faith, the answer is, if the government does not repress them, and prevent them having effect, it is as much a breach as a formal refusal to comply on its part. In the eye of a foreign nation, if our engagements are broken, it is of no moment whether it is for the want of good intention in the government, or for want of power to restrain its subjects.

Suppose a violence committed by an American vessel on the vessel of another nation on the high seas, and after complaint made there is no redress given. Is not this a hostility against the injured nation which will justify reprisals?

But if I am not misinformed, there are violations going on in form of law. I am told that indictments continue to be brought under the former confiscation laws. A palpable

infraction, if true, of the sixth article of the treaty, to which an immediate stop ought no doubt to be put.

It has been said by some men that the operation of this treaty is suspended till the definitive treaty; a plain subterfuge. Whatever is clearly expressed in the provisional or preliminary treaty is as binding from the moment it is made as the definitive treaty, which, in fact, only develops, explains, and fixes more precisely what may have been too generally expressed in the former.

Suppose the British should now send away not only the negroes, but all other property, and all the public records in their possession belonging to us, on the pretence above stated; should we not justly accuse them with breaking faith? Is this not already done in the case of the negroes who have been carried away, though founded upon a very different principle—a doubtful construction of the treaty, not a denial of its immediate operation.

In fine, is it our interest to advance this doctrine and to countenance the position that nothing is binding till the definitive treaty, when there are examples of *years* intervening between the preliminary and definitive treaties?

Sir Guy Carleton, in his correspondence, has appeared to consider the treaty as immediately obligatory, and it has been the policy which I have pursued to promote the same idea.

I am not, indeed, apprehensive of a renewal of the war, for peace is necessary to Great Britian. I think it also most probable her disposition to conciliate this country will outweigh the resentments which a breach of our engagements is calculated to inspire. But with a treaty which has exceeded the hopes of the most sanguine; which, in the articles of boundary and the fisheries, is even better than we asked; circumstanced, too, as this country is with respect to the means of making war, I think it the height of imprudence to run any risk. Great Britain, without recommencing hostilities, may evade parts of the treaty. She may keep possession of the frontier posts; she may obstruct the free enjoyment of the fisheries; she may be indisposed to such exten-

sive concessions in matters of commerce as it is our interest to aim at. In all this she would find no opposition from any foreign power, and we are not in a condition to oblige her to any thing. If we imagine that France, obviously embarrassed herself in her finances, would renew the war to oblige Great Britain to the restoration of frontier posts, or to a compliance with the stipulations respecting the fisheries (especially after a manifest breach of the treaty on our part), we speculate much at random. Observations might be made on the last article which would prove that it is not the policy of France to support our interest there. Are we prepared, for the mere gratification of our resentments, to put those great national objects to the hazard: to leave our Western frontier in a state of insecurity; to relinquish the fur-trade; and to abridge our pretensions to the fisheries? Do we think national character so light a thing as to be willing to sacrifice the public faith to individual animosity?

Let the case be fairly stated: Great Britain and America, two independent nations, at war. The former in possession of considerable posts and districts of territory belonging to the latter, and also of the means of obstructing certain commercial advantages in which it is deeply interested.

But it is not uncommon in treaties of peace for the *uti possidetis* to take place. Great Britain, however, in the present instance, stipulates to restore all our posts and territories in her possession. She even adds an extent not within our original claims, more than a compensation for a small part ceded in another quarter. She agrees to readmit us to a participation in the fisheries. What equivalent do we give for this? Congress are to recommend the restoration of property to those who have adhered to her, and expressly engage that no future injury shall be done them in person, liberty, or property. This is the sole condition, on our part, where there is not an immediate reciprocity (the recovery of debts and liberation of prisoners being mutual, the former, indeed, only declaring what the rights of private faith, which all civilized nations hold sacred, would have declared with-

out it), and stands as the single equivalent for all the restitutions and concessions to be made by Great Britain. Will it be honest in us to violate this condition, or will it be prudent to put it in competition with all the important matters to be performed on the other side?

Will foreign nations be willing to undertake any thing with us, or for us, when they find that the nature of our governments will allow no dependence to be placed upon our engagements? I have omitted saying any thing of the impolicy of inducing by our severity a great number of useful citizens, whose situations do not make them a proper object of resentment, to abandon the country to form settlements that will hereafter become our rivals, animated with a hatred to us which will descend to their posterity. Nothing, however, can be more unwise than to contribute, as we are doing, to people the shores and wilderness of Nova Scotia, a colony which, by its position, will become a competitor with us, among other things, in that branch of commerce on which our navigation and navy will essentially depend;—I mean the fisheries, in which I have no doubt the State of New York will hereafter have a considerable share.

To your Excellency I freely deliver my sentiments, because I am persuaded you cannot be a stranger to the force of these considerations. I fear not even to hazard them to the justice and good sense of those whom I have the honor to represent. I esteem it my duty to do it, because the question is important to the interests of the State in its relation to the United States.

Those who consult only their passions might choose to construe what I say as too favorable to a set of men who have been the enemies of the public liberty, but those for whose esteem I am most concerned will acquit me of any personal consideration, and will perceive that I only urge the cause of national honor, safety, and advantage. We have assumed an independent station; we ought to feel and to act in a manner consistent with the dignity of that station.

I anxiously wish to see every prudent measure taken to pre-

vent those combinations which will certainly disgrace us, if they do not involve us in other calamities. Whatever distinctions are judged necessary to be made in the cases of those persons who have been in opposition to the common cause, let them be made by legal authority, on a fair construction of the treaty, consistent with national faith and national honor.

* P. S.—Your Excellency will have been informed that Congress have instructed General Washington to garrison the frontier posts, when surrendered, with the three years' Continental troops. This is more for the interest of the State than to have them garrisoned at its particular expense, and I should wish that permanent provision might be made on the same principle. I wait to see whether any Continental peace establishment for garrisons, etc., will take place, before I engage the consent of Congress to a separate provision.

I cannot forbear adding a word on the subject of money. The only reliance we now have for redeeming a large anticipation on the public credit, already made and making for the benefit of the army, is on the taxes coming in. The collection hitherto is out of all proportion to the demand. It is of vast consequence at this juncture that every thing possible should be done to forward it. I forbear entering into details which would be very striking upon this subject. I will only say that unless there is a serious exertion in the States, public credit must erelong receive another shock very disagreeable in its consequences.

TO JOHN DICKINSON.†

1783.

SIR:

Having always entertained an esteem for you personally, I could not, without reluctance, yield to impressions that might weaken that sentiment, and it is with pain I find

* Thus divided in original in State Department.

† In the edition of 1850 this letter is headed "To Reed," presumably intending Joseph Reed, who was President of Pennsylvania in 1781. The original in the State Department has no address. The mutiny to which this refers was

myself drawn by circumstances to animadvert upon the late message from the Executive Council to the Assembly of Pennsylvania relative to the mutiny, in a manner which may seem to impeach the candor of those who were the authors of it.

But it will be impossible for persons who have read the report of the committee and the message of the Council, however inclined to make allowances for the force of involuntary bias, not to conclude that on one side or the other the facts have been wilfully discolored. I decline any attempt to set the public opinion right upon this subject, because, after all that can be said, the judgments of men will eventually be determined by personal and party prepossessions. So far as I am concerned, I persuade myself that those who are acquainted with me will place entire confidence in my fairness and veracity. I doubt not your Excellency's friends will be equally partial to you, and those of the Council to them. But though I should despair of rectifying or fixing the public opinion by an appeal to the public, and though I have seen too much of the ridicule thrown upon such appeals from men in official stations, and of the ill effect they have had upon the national character, not to be willing to sacrifice the desire of justifying myself to considerations of prudence and propriety, yet I cannot forbear indulging my feelings so far as to enter into a few explanations with your Excellency, submitting the justness of them to the testimony of your own mind.

As this is a mere private discussion, I address myself to your Excellency in particular; and the rather, as, from the style and manner of the message, I take it for granted you had the principal agency in it, and I shall consider, on the same grounds, the notes in ———* paper of the ———*, as a comment on the report of the committee by yourself, in aid of the message.

in 1783, the letter is dated 1783, and John Dickinson was President from 1782 to 1786. It seems obvious that this letter was written to the supreme magistrate of Pennsylvania, and if so it must have been to Dickinson.

* These blanks are in the manuscript.

I take up the matter individually, because I mean to treat it on a private footing, and because, though I do not acknowledge any peculiar responsibility, it happened to be my lot, as chairman, principally to conduct the conferences on the part of the committee.

I regard the whole of this business as a most unfortunate one, in which, probably, none of the actors will acquire great credit. I deplore it, as tending to interrupt the harmony between Congress and a respectable, a meritorious member of the Union. Who were right or who were wrong is a question of less importance than how mutual irritations may be best healed. Whatever revives or continues the former, is to be regretted. I lament to be under an inducement to discuss circumstances that relate to it in the remotest degree. Nothing but an attack upon the ingenuousness of my conduct could have called me to it. Its prudence, either collectively or individually, would patiently have been consigned to the lash of censure and criticism, merited or unmerited.

Happily, in the present case, the members of the committee have a strong ground, from which they cannot easily be forced. Apprehensive of misconception, I will not say of misrepresentation, they tried to render it impossible by written communications. The presumption, with impartial minds, cannot fail to be in favor of that side which gave so decisive a proof of its disposition to fairness as to endeavor to put it out of its own power to misrepresent.

The professed scruples of the Council cannot be admitted to have any weight. Usage and the plainest rules of propriety will dictate that it never could have wounded the dignity or delicacy of the executive of any State to have given to a committee of Congress, appointed to confer on a subject of moment, a written answer to a request in writing after previous explanations. The fact stated speaks for itself. The consequences show that the precaution of the committee was well judged, and that it wonld have been well for the Council to have concurred.

In the present case it might be observed that there was, in

the first instance, a written application from Congress to the Council, in the customary form of resolutions; and though a committee was authorized to confer and explain, a formal and authentic answer might reasonably have been expected by Congress, and, when desired by the committee, should have been understood as desired on their behalf.

There is an awkwardness in reasoning upon self-evident positions; but as the Council have, by their conduct in the first instance and by their message since, put forward a doubt upon the subject, and made it a point of importance, I shall be excused for examining it a little further. On what could the objection of the Council be founded? They say it had been unusual. Admitting the fact, was the mere novelty of the thing a sufficient reason against it? If there was no apparent inconvenience in making a new precedent; if, on the contrary, there was a manifest convenience in it, ought not such a punctilio to have given way to considerations of utility?

Was it derogatory to the dignity of the Council? Surely, if they communicate in writing with the executive servants of Congress, even those in subordinate stations, as is the practice of every day, and as is indispensable to the prosecution of public business, they might, at less expense of dignity, pursue the same mode with a part of that body itself.

The distinction taken by the Council in their message to the Assembly, respecting the responsibility of such executive officers, as not applicable to a committee, if it amounts to any thing, proves only this: That such officers ought in prudence to take greater precautions for their own justification than a committee of Congress need to do. It is not to be inferred, if a committee of Congress acting ministerially think it expedient to use circumspection, that those with whom they are transacting business can with propriety refuse to join them in that mode which is best adapted to precision and certainty.

But indeed the ground of distinction is erroneous. A committee of Congress act in a ministerial capacity, and are therefore responsible to the body to which they belong,

as well as the servants of that body, though in a different manner. If it be said that they do not act ministerially, but stand in the place of Congress, then the Council, upon their own principles, ought to have complied with their request.

To diminish the exceptionableness of their refusal, it is true, as stated by the Council, that though they said they could not *condescend* to do what the committee had asked, yet they declared themselves willing to *grant* an answer in writing if Congress should request it, and that they proposed that the committee should put their verbal answer in writing, to be afterward perused and examined by them.

The answer of the committee, as I doubt not your Excellency will recollect, was, as to the first point, that Congress in all probability would not make the request, having determined (as the Council had been already informed) not to resume their deliberations in this city until effective measures had been taken to suppress the mutiny, and should they assemble, would naturally feel a delicacy in requesting what had been denied to their committee. And as to the second point, that the Council having judged it inexpedient to give a written answer, the committee would content themselves with making the most accurate report in their power, relying upon the confidence of the body to which they belonged and upon the candor of the Council.

Your Excellency is too good a judge of human nature, as well as the force of language, not to have perceived at the time the effect which the refusal of the Council had upon my mind. I own it struck me as an uncandid reserve, or an unbecoming stateliness, and in either supposition a disrespect to the body of which the committee were members.

Though nothing enters less into my temper than an inclination to fetter business by punctilio, after the Council had discovered such overwhelming nicety I should have thought it a degradation to my official character to have consented to their proposal.

The desire of self-justification is so natural that I should not have been surprised to have seen the transactions which are the subject of the Council's message receive a coloring favorable to their purpose; but I did not expect to see material facts either suppressed or denied.

The report made by the committee on the first interview with the Council was, I acknowledge, from memory, and therefore I admit a possibility of error; but so far as my memory can be relied on, the representation was just. And I am certain that there is a mistake in the insinuation that the circumstance of the message sent to Congress by the Board of Sergeants was not mentioned at all to the Council, for I have a note of it, taken immediately after the first conference subsequent to the mutiny. The affair, by the event of ———, having assumed a more serious aspect, I kept a regular minute of the proceedings, a summary of which made up our report to Congress, and which I shall annex at large to this letter for your Excellency's perusal.

The message entirely omits the declaration of the Council that ———*; and the note says that the Council only declared: "That they could not be sure that such another insult would produce those exertions." † The difference in this article is of great importance. The declaration made so deep an impression at the time that almost the precise words remained in my memory. They were twice repeated, as well when we saw your Excellency alone in your own house in the morning, as when you delivered to us in the Council-chamber the determination of the Council.

Mr. Ellsworth ‡ in half an hour afterwards repeated them to several members of Congress assembled at the President's house, and in a few hours from that time I committed them

* This blank is in the manuscript.

† "The words, as reported by the committee to Congress, were: 'It,' *i. e.*, the arming of the citizens to suppress the mutineers, 'was not to be expected, merely from a repetition of the insult which had happened.'"—NOTE BY COL. PICKERING.

‡ "Mr. Ellsworth was the other member of the committee.—T. P."

to writing. I cannot suppose your Excellency's recollection fails you in this particular, and I must pointedly appeal to your candor.

To show the inaccuracy with which the report of the committee was composed, it is observed in the notes with respect to that part which relates to the commission given by the mutineers to the officers whom they had chosen to represent them, that only two hours had intervened between that event and the conference with the Council, and that it was very improbable the knowledge of it could have so early reached the committee. It is added that none of the Council remembers to have heard a single syllable respecting it during the whole conference.

As to the argument drawn from the short interval between the delivery of the commission and the conference, it will be sufficient to say that the committee held a constant communication with General St. Clair, and that he kept a vigilant eye upon all the motions of the mutineers; that his access to them was easy; that the fact in question was a matter of immediate notoriety; that two hours were abundant time for a thing of that nature to be conveyed from the barracks to General St. Clair's quarters; and that one of the committee had actually seen and obtained the intelligence from him a little time before the interview with the Council commenced.

It is much more extraordinary that the Council should have been apprised of it so late, than that the committee should have known it so early. As to the memory of the Council, it is unfortunate it should have been so fallible as it is said to have been; but I would rather suppose "in the quick succession of circumstances" the matter had escaped their recollection, than that my minutes as well as my memory should have deceived me. I well recollect also that your Excellency, when it was mentioned, acknowledged that it rather contradicted the pacific appearance which the conduct of the troops in other respects wore.

These are the essential differences in point of fact be-

tween the report of the committee and the message of the Council; the whole complexion, indeed, of the one materially varies from the other; but the most common observer must have noticed how different an aspect the same facts will bear differently dressed and arranged. It was to avoid this we proposed to reduce them to writing, but as this has not been done, spectators must judge, from the situation of the parties and the course of the transactions, which side has given the justest relation.

I cannot, however, forbear remarking that I see expressions of civility on the part of the committee, making a figure in the message very different from their genuine intention, being introduced in a manner that gives them the air of concessions in favor of the conduct of the Council. Your Excellency will certainly recollect that the committee were very remote from a concurrence in sentiment with the Council; and, though they did not presume to judge of the disposition of the citizens, strongly urged the expedience and necessity of calling out the militia, and facility of employing them with success against an unofficered and disorderly body of mutinous soldiers. It is true also that they acknowledged the candor with which the Council exposed to them what they deemed the temper of their citizens and their own difficulties and embarrassments, which were, no doubt, delineated with great energy of language and display of circumstances, but they certainly never admitted the candor of refusing an answer in writing, which was a part of the *business* transacted with the Council; nor did they *withdraw* without giving an intelligible intimation of their sense of this proceeding.

I was also surprised to see any part of the private and confidential conversation I had with your Excellency ushered into the message from the Council, and moulded into such a shape as to imply, by an obvious construction, an approbation of their reasons. Your Excellency will admit the following state of this transaction to be a just one.

I waited upon the Council to correct a piece of informa-

tion I had given them respecting ammunition, but even this is mistated, as will be seen by my minutes. Having done this, my official business ended, when I was taken aside by your Excellency, and a conversation passed in declared confidence. You informed me that a meeting of the militia officers was then holding, and in consultation with the Council about eventual measures (in consequence, as I conjectured, of a communication to you the preceding evening from the delegates of the State, of the intention of Congress to remove from the city in case they did not receive satisfactory assurances of support). You added that you hoped nothing would be precipitated, but that proper allowance would be made for the situation of the Council.

I understood your observations with reference to the departure of Congress, and replied to this effect: That I viewed the departure of Congress as a delicate measure, including consequences important to the national character abroad, and critical with respect to the State of Pennsylvania, and, in particular, the city of Philadelphia; that the triumph of a handful of mutinous soldiers, permitted in a place which is considered as the capital of America, to surround and, in fact, imprison Congress, without the least effort on the part of the citizens to uphold their dignity and authority, so as to oblige them to remove from the place which had been their residence during the Revolution, would, it was to be feared, be viewed at a distance as a general disaffection of the citizens to the Federal Government, might discredit its negotiations, and affect the national interests; that at home it might give a deep wound to the reputation of Pennsylvania, might draw upon it the resentments of the other States, and sow discord between Congress and the State; that the removal of Congress would probably bring the affair to a crisis, and, by convincing the mutineers that extremities were intended, would either intimidate them into a submission, or determine them to immediate excesses; that, impressed with these considerations, and still hoping, notwithstanding some appearances to the contrary, that the mutineers

might be sincere in their professions of submission, or that the Council, on further examination, would find it in their power to act with vigor, I had declined giving my assent to a report in writing, which would necessarily be followed by the departure of Congress; that though the committee had no discretion by the powers under which they acted, but were bound, by the tenor of their instructions, the moment they did not receive "satisfactory assurances of prompt and adequate exertions on the part of the State for supporting the public authority," to advise the adjournment of Congress to Trenton or Princeton, and I therefore considered the delay of this advice as at their extreme peril; yet, as to myself, I should persist in it till the result of the present consultation with the militia officers, or till some new circumstance should turn up to explain the designs of the mutineers; and in pursuing this line of conduct I should counteract the sense of some gentlemen whose feelings upon the occasion were keen, and the opinions of others who thought the situation of Congress, under the existing circumstances, extremely awkward, precarious, and unjustifiable to their constituents.

Your Excellency approved my intention, wished for time, and promised if any new resolution should be taken to give me immediate notice of it.

The meeting of the militia officers dissolved; I heard nothing from your Excellency. General St. Clair, about two in the afternoon, informed the committee that the officers appointed by the soldiers to manage their business had, in the first instance, refused to give him an account of their transactions, the which was only extracted from them by a peremptory demand. He mentioned to us the instructions they had received from the soldiers, which contained faint and affected concessions, mixed with new and inadmissible demands.

The whole affair wore the complexion of collusion between the officers of the committee and the soldiery, and of a mere amusement on their part until they could gain fresh strength and execute their project, whatever it might be, with greater advantage.

This behavior of the officers gave the affair a new and more serious aspect, and overcame my opposition to the report. Mr. Peters, on hearing the relation of General St. Clair, declared at once that he thought the committee had then no alternative; at least, what he said was understood in this sense by General St. Clair, Mr. Elsworth, and myself. If I am not much mistaken, General St. Clair also expressed his opinion that Congress were unsafe in the city.

The ideas I suggested to your Excellency, in the conversation I have mentioned, were substantially expressed to several members of Congress as the motives of my delay, and particularly, I recollect, to Mr. Madison, with these observations in addition: That though I was fully convinced Congress, under an immediate view of circumstances, would in reality be justified in withdrawing from a place where such an outrage to government had been with impunity perpetrated by a body of armed mutineers, still, for several days, in complete command of the city, and where either the feebleness of public councils or the indisposition of the citizens afforded no assurance of protection and support, yet, as the opinions of men would be governed by events, and as the most probable event was that the removal of Congress, announcing decisive measures of coercion to the soldiery, would awe them into submission, there was great danger that the reputation of Congress would suffer by the easy termination of the business, and that they would be accused of levity, timidity, or rashness.

Though not within the scope of my original intention, I will indulge in a few additional reflections on this subject. I am sensible that the Council, in some respects, stand upon advantageous ground in this discussion. Congress left the city because they had no forces at hand, no jurisdiction over the militia, and no assurances of effectual support from those who had. The Council, as the executive of the State, were necessitated to remain on the spot. Soon after Congress removed, the mutineers were deserted by their leaders and surrendered at discretion.

The multitude will be very apt to conclude that the affair was of trifling consequence; that it vanished under its own insignificance; that Congress took up the matter in too high a tone of authority; that they discovered a prudish nicety and irritability about their own dignity; that the Council were more temperate, more humane, and possessed of greater foresight.

The bias in favor of an injured army, the propensity of the human mind to lean to the speciousness of professed humanity rather than to the necessary harshness of authority, the vague and imperfect notions of what is due to public authority in an infant popular government, and the insinuating plausibility of a well-constructed *message*, will all contribute to that conclusion.

But let us suppose an impartial man of sense, well acquainted with facts, to form an argument upon the subject. It appears to me he might naturally fall into this train of combination.

It is a well-known fact that, from the necessities of the war, or the delinquencies of the several States, Congress were not enabled to comply with their engagements to the army, which, after a glorious and successful struggle for their country, much suffering, exemplary patience, and signal desert, they were compelled, by the irresistible dictates of an empty treasury and a ruined credit, to disband, after having given strong indications of their discontent and resentment of the public neglect. A large part of the army suffer themselves to be patiently dismissed; a particular corps of four or five hundred men, stationed in the place where Congress reside, refuse to accept their discharges but on certain specified conditions.

They even go further, and, stimulated by their injuries, or encouraged and misled by designing persons, are emboldened to send a threatening message to Congress, declaring to them that unless they would do them justice immediately they would find means of redress for themselves. Measures are indirectly taken to appease this disorder and give the discontented soldiers as much satisfaction as the situation of

things will permit. Shortly after, accounts are received that another corps, at——miles' distance, have also mutinied, and that a part of them, to the number of about eighty men, are on their march to join those who had already discovered so refractory a disposition. A committee of Congress is immediately appointed to confer with the executive of the State on the measures proper to be pursued in this exigency. That committee in the first instance suggest to the Council the expedience of calling out a body of militia to intercept the detachment of mutineers on its march and represent the danger of the progress of the spirit of mutiny and of future outrages should those on their march be suffered, without molestation, to join a more numerous corps in the same temper with themselves.

The Council urge a variety of difficulties: the shortness of the time to collect the militia before the mutineers would arrive, the reluctance with which the citizens would obey a call against men whom they consider as meritorious, and injured, and the like. The committee perceiving the unwillingness of the Council to employ the militia, desist from pressing, and recur to expedients. The day after, the mutineers march in triumph into the city, and unite themselves with those who are already there; and the following day, the whole body assemble in arms, throw off all obedience to their officers, and, in open defiance of government, march to the place which is the usual seat of Congress and the Council of the State, while both are actually sitting; surround it with guards, and send a message to the Council, demanding authority to appoint, themselves, officers to command them, with absolute discretion to take such measures as those officers should think proper to redress their grievances, accompanied with a threat that, if there was not a compliance in twenty minutes, they would let in an injured soldiery upon them, and abide the consequence.

The members of Congress who were at the time assembled, request General St. Clair, who happened to be present, to take such measures as he should judge expedient, without

committing the honor of government, to divert the storm, and induce the troops to return to their quarters without perpetrating acts of violence. General St. Clair, in concert with the Council, grants the mutineers permission to elect, out of officers then or formerly in commission, such as they should confide in, to represent their grievances to the Council, with a promise that the Council would confer with the persons elected for that purpose. Having obtained this promise, the mutineers return to their quarters, in military parade, and continue in open defiance of government.

The concession made was a happy compromise between an attention to dignity and a prudent regard to safety.

Men who had dared to carry their insolence to such an extreme, and who saw no opposition to their outrages, were not to be expected to retreat without an appearance, at least, of gratifying their demands. The slightest accident was sufficient to prompt men in such a temper and situation to tragical excesses.

But however it might become the delicacy of government not to depart from the promise it had given, it was its duty to provide effectually against a repetition of such outrages, and to put itself in a situation to give, instead of receiving, the law, and to manifest that its compliance was not the effect of necessity, but of choice.

This was not to be considered as the disorderly riot of an unarmed mob, but as the deliberate mutiny of an incensed soldiery, carried to the utmost point of outrage short of assassination. The licentiousness of an army is to be dreaded in every government, but in a republic it is more particularly to be restrained; and when directed against the civil authority, to be checked with energy and punished with severity. The merits and sufferings of the troops might be a proper motive for mitigating punishment, when it was in the power of the government to inflict it; but it was no reason for relaxing in the measures necessary to put itself in that situation. Its authority was first to be vindicated, and then its clemency to be displayed.

The rights of government are as essential to be defended as the rights of individuals. The security of the one is inseparable from that of the other. And, indeed, in every new government, especially of the popular kind, the great danger is that public authority will not be sufficiently respected.

But upon this occasion there were more particular reasons for decision.

Congress knew there were within two or three days' march of the city a more considerable body of the same corps, part of which had mutinied and come to town, and had been the chief actors in the late disorder; that those men had with difficulty been kept, by the exertions of their officers, from joining the insurgents in the first instance; that there was another corps in their neighborhood which, a little time before, had also discovered symptoms of mutiny; that a considerable part of the same line which were in mutiny in town was every moment expected to arrive from the southward, and there was the greatest reason to conclude would be infected with the same spirit on their arrival, as had presently happened in the case of a small detachment which had joined a few days before; that there were besides large numbers of disbanded soldiers scattered through the country, in want, and who had not yet had time to settle down to any occupation, and exchange their military for private habits; that some of these were really coming in and adding themselves to the revolters; that an extensive accession of strength might be gained from these different quarters, and that there were all the sympathies of like common wrongs, distresses, and resentments to bring them together and to unite them in one cause. The partial success of those who had already made an experiment would be a strong encouragement to others, the rather as the whole line had formerly mutinied, not only with impunity, but with advantage to themselves.

In this state of things, decision was most compatible with the safety of the community, as well as the dignity of government. Though no general convulsion might be to

be apprehended, serious mischiefs might attend the progress of the disorder. Indeed it would have been meanness to have negotiated and temporized with an armed banditti of four or five hundred men, who, in any other situation than surrounding a defenceless senate, could only become formidable by being feared. This was not an insurrection of a whole people; it was not an army, with their officers at their head, demanding the justice of their country—either of which might have made caution and concession respectable; it was a handful of mutinous soldiers, who had equally violated the laws of discipline and the rights of public authority.

Congress therefore wisely resolve that "it is necessary that effectual measures be immediately taken for supporting the public authority," and call upon the State in which they reside for the assistance of its militia, at the same time that they send orders for the march of a body of regular forces as an eventual resource.

There was a propriety in calling for the aid of the militia, in the first place, for different reasons. Civil government may always, with more peculiar propriety, resort to the aid of the citizens to repel military insults or encroachments.

'T is there, it ought to be supposed, where it may seek its surest dependence, especially in a democracy which is the creature of the people. The citizens of each State are, in an aggregate light, the citizens of the United States, and bound as much to support the representatives of the whole as their own immediate representatives. The insult was not to Congress personally; it was to the government, to public authority in general, and was very properly put upon that footing. The regular forces which Congress could command were at a great distance, and could not, but in a length of time, be brought to effectuate their purpose. The disorder continued to exist on the spot where they were, was likely to increase by delay, and might be productive of sudden and mischievous effects by being neglected.

The city and the bank were in immediate danger of being rifled, and perhaps of suffering other calamities. The citi-

zens, therefore, were the proper persons to make the first exertion.

The objection that these were not the objects of the care of Congress, can only serve to mislead the vulgar. The peace and safety of the place which was the immediate residence of Congress, *endangered, too, by the troops of the United States*, demanded their interposition. The President of the State of Pennsylvania was himself of this opinion, having declared to a member of that body, that, as their troops were the offenders, it was proper for them to declare the necessity of calling out the militia, as a previous step to its being done.

Nor is there more weight in the supposition that the danger was inconsiderable, and that, from the pacific appearances of the troops, it was to be expected the disorder would subside of itself. The facts were, that the troops still continued in a state of mutiny, had made no submissions nor offered any, and that they affected to negotiate with their arms in their hands.

A band of mutinous soldiers in such a situation, uncontrolled, and elated with their own power, was not to be trusted.

The most sudden vicissitudes and contradictory changes were to be expected, and a fit of intoxication was sufficient at any moment, with men who had already gone such length, to make the city a scene of plunder and massacre. It was the height of rashness to leave the city exposed to the bare possibility of such mischiefs.

The only question, in this view, is, whether there was greater danger to the city in attempting their reduction by force, than in endeavoring by palliatives to bring them to a sense of duty? It has been urged, and appeared to have operated strongly upon the minds of the Council,* that the soldiers being already embodied, accustomed to arms, and

* Your Excellency will recollect that in our private conversation you urged this consideration, and appealed to my military experience, and that I made substantially the observations which follow.

ready to act at a moment's warning, it would be extremely hazardous to attempt to collect the citizens to subdue them, as the mutineers might have taken advantage of the first confusion incident to the measure to do a great deal of mischief before this militia could have assembled in equal or superior force.

It is not to be denied but that a small body of disciplined troops, headed and led by their officers, with a plan of conduct, could have effected a great deal in similar circumstances; but it is equally certain that nothing can be more contemptible than a body of men used to be commanded and to obey, when deprived of the example and direction of their officers. They are infinitely less to be dreaded than an equal number of men who have never been broken to command, nor exchanged their natural courage for that artificial kind which is the effect of discipline and habit. Soldiers transfer their confidence from themselves to their officers, face danger by the force of example, the dread of punishment, and the sense of necessity. Take away these inducements and leave them to themselves, they are no longer resolute than till they are opposed.

In the present case it was to be relied upon that the appearance of opposition would instantly bring the mutineers to a sense of their insignificance and to submission. Conscious of their weakness from the smallness of their numbers, in a populous city and in the midst of a populous country, awed by the consequences of resisting government by arms, and confounded by the want of proper leaders and proper direction, the common soldiers would have thought of nothing but making their peace by the sacrifice of those who had been the authors of their misconduct.

The idea, therefore, of coercion was the safest and most prudent, for more was to be apprehended from leaving them to their own passions than from attempting to control them by force. It will be seen, by and by, how far the events, justly appreciated, correspond with this reasoning.

Congress were not only right in adopting measures of co-

ercion, but they were also right in resolving to change their situation if proper exertions were not made by the particular government and citizens of the place where they resided. The want of such exertions would evince some defect, no matter where, that would prove they ought to have no confidence in their situation. They were, to all intents and purposes, in the power of a lawless, armed banditti, enraged, whether justly or not, against them. However they might have had a right to expose their own persons to insult and outrage, they had no right to expose the character of representatives, or the dignity of the States they represented, or of the Union. It was plain they could not with propriety, in such a state of things, proceed in their deliberations where they were, and it was right they should repair to a place where they could do it. It was far from impossible that the mutineers might have been induced to seize their persons as hostages for their own security, as well as with a hope of extorting concessions. Had such an event taken place the whole country would have exclaimed: Why did not Congress withdraw from a place where they found they could not be assured of support; where the government was so feeble, or the citizens so indisposed, as to suffer three or four hundred mutinous soldiers to violate, with impunity, the authority of the United States and of their own State?

When they resolved to depart, on the want of adequate exertions, they had reason to doubt their being made, from the disinclination shown by the Council to call out the militia in the first instance; and when they did actually depart, they were informed by the Council that the efforts of the citizens were not to be looked for, even from a repetition of the outrage which had already happened, and it was to be doubted what measure of outrage would produce them. They had also convincing proof that the mutiny was more serious than it had even at first appeared, by the participation of some of the officers.

To throw the blame of harshness and precipitancy upon Congress, it is said that their dignity was only *accidentally*

and *undesignedly* offended. Much stress has been laid upon the message from the soldiery being directed to the Council, and not to them. All this, however, is very immaterial to the real merits of the question. Whatever might have been the first intention of the mutineers in this particular act, whether it proceeded from artifice or confusion of ideas, the indignity to Congress was the same. They knew that Congress customarily held their deliberations at the State House; and if it even be admitted that they knew Saturday to be a day of usual recess, which, perhaps, is not altogether probable, when they came to the place they saw and knew Congress to be assembled there. They did not desist in consequence of this, but proceeded to station their guards and execute their purposes. Members of Congress went out to them, remonstrated with them, represented the danger of their proceedings to themselves, and desired them to withdraw; but they persisted till they obtained what they supposed a part of their object. A majority of the same persons had, some days before, sent a message, almost equally exceptionable, to Congress; and at the time they scarcely spoke of any other body than Congress, who, indeed, may naturally be supposed to have been the main object of their resentments: for Congress, having always appeared to the soldiery to be the body who contracted with them, and who had broken faith with them, it is not to be supposed they were capable of investigating the remote causes of the failures, so as to transfer the odium from Congress to the State.

But the substantial thing to be considered in this question is the violation of public authority. It cannot be disputed that the mutiny of troops is a violation of that authority to which they owe obedience. This was, in the present case, aggravated to a high degree of atrociousness by the gross insult to the government of Pennsylvania, in the face of Congress and in defiance of their displeasure. It was further aggravated by continuing in that condition for a series of time.

The reasons have been assigned that made it incumbent

upon Congress to interpose; and when they called upon the State of Pennsylvania, not only to vindicate its own rights, but to support their authority, the declining a compliance was a breach of the Confederation and of the duty which the State of Pennsylvania owed to the United States. The best apology for the government of Pennsylvania, in this case, is that they could not command the services of their citizens. But so improper a disposition in the citizens, if admitted, must operate as an additional justification to Congress in their removal.

The subsequent events, justly appreciated, illustrate the propriety of their conduct. The mutineers did not make voluntary submissions in consequence of negotiation, persuasion, or conviction. They did not submit till after Congress had left the city, publishing their intentions of coercion; till after there had been an *actual call* upon the militia; till their leaders and instigators, alarmed by the approach of force and the fear of being betrayed by the men, fled. They were reduced by coercion, not overcome by mildness.

It appears, too, that while they were professing repentance and a return to their duty, they were tampering with the troops at Yorktown and Lancaster to increase their strength, and that two officers, at least, were concerned in the mutiny, who, by their letters since, have confessed that some project of importance was in contemplation.

The call for the militia was made the day after it had been pronounced ineligible by the Council. There could have been little change in that time, either in the temper or preparations of the citizens. The truth is, that the departure of Congress brought the matter to a crisis, and that the Council were compelled by necessity to do what they ought to have done before through choice.

It is to be lamented they did not, by an earlier decision, prevent the necessity of Congress taking a step which may have many disagreeable consequences. They then would * * *

[The rest of the manuscript is lacking.]

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

PRINCETON, June 29, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

I am informed that among other disagreeable things said about the removal of Congress from Philadelphia, it is insinuated that it was a contrivance of some members to get them out of the State of Pennsylvania into one of those to which they belonged; and I am told that this insinuation has been pointed at me in particular.

Though I am persuaded that all disinterested persons will justify Congress in quitting a place where they were told they were not to expect support (for the conduct of the Council amounted to that), yet I am unwilling to be held up as having had an extraordinary agency in the measure for interested purposes when the fact is directly the reverse. As you were a witness to my conduct and opinions through the whole of the transaction, I am induced to trouble you for your testimony upon this occasion. I do not mean to make a public use of it, but, through my friends, to vindicate myself from the imputations I have mentioned.

I will therefore request your answers to the following questions:

Did that part of the resolutions which related to the removal of Congress originate with me or not?

Did I, as a member of the committee, appear to press the departure, or did I not rather manifest a strong disposition to postpone that event as long as possible, even against the general current of opinion?

I wish you to be as particular and full in your answer as your memory will permit. I think you will recollect that my idea was clearly this: That the mutiny ought not to be terminated by negotiation; that Congress were justifiable in leaving a place where they did not receive the support which they had a right to expect, but, as their removal was a measure of a critical and delicate nature, might have an ill appearance in Europe, and might, from events, be susceptible of an unfavorable interpretation in this country, it was prudent

to delay it till its necessity became apparent; not only till it was manifest there would be no change in the spirit which seemed to actuate the Council, but till it was evident complete submission was not to be expected from the troops; that to give full time for this it would be proper to delay the departure of Congress till the latest period which would be compatible with the idea of meeting at Trenton or Princeton on Thursday—perhaps even till Thursday morning.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

PHILADELPHIA, July 6, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

On my arrival in this city I am more convinced than I was of the necessity of giving a just state of facts to the public. The current runs strongly against Congress, and in a great measure for want of information. When facts are explained they make an impression, and incline to conclusions more favorable to us.

I have no copy of the reports in my possession, which puts it out of my power to publish them. Will you procure and send me one without loss of time? Without appearing, I intend to give them to the public with some additional explanations. This done with moderation will, no doubt, have a good effect.

The prevailing idea is, that the actors in the removal of Congress were influenced by the desire of getting them out of the city, and the generality of the remainder by timidity—some say passion. Few give a more favorable interpretation.

I will thank you in your letter to me to answer the following question:

What appeared to be my ideas and disposition respecting the removal of Congress? Did I appear to wish to hasten it, or did I not rather show a strong disposition to procrastinate it?

I will be obliged to you in answering this question, to do it fully. I do not intend to make any public use of it, but

through my friends to vindicate myself from the insinuation I have mentioned, and in that to confute the supposition that the motive assigned did actuate the members on whom it fell to be more particularly active.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 22, 1783.

I wrote you, my beloved Eliza, by the last post, which I hope will not meet with the fate that many others of my letters must have met with. I count upon setting out to see you in four days; but I have been so frequently disappointed by unforeseen events, that I shall not be without apprehensions of being detained, till I have begun my journey. The members of Congress are very pressing with me not to go away at this time, as the House is thin, and as the definitive treaty is momently expected.

Tell your father that Mr. Rivington,* in a letter to the South Carolina delegates, has given information, coming to him from Admiral Arbuthnot, that the Mercury frigate is arrived at New York with the definitive treaty, and that the city was to be evacuated yesterday by the treaty.

I am strongly urged to stay a few days for the ratification of the treaty; at all events, however, I will not be long absent.

I give you joy of the happy conclusion of this important work in which your country has been engaged. Now, in a very short time, I hope we shall be happily settled in New York.

My love to your father. Kiss my boy a thousand times.

TO JOHN JAY.

PHILADELPHIA, July 25, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

Though I have not performed my promise of writing to you which I made you when you left this country, yet I have not the less interested myself in your welfare and success.

* Probably the well known New York publisher of that name.

I have been witness with pleasure to every event which has had a tendency to advance you in the esteem of your country, and I may assure you with sincerity that it is as high as you could possibly wish. All have united in the warmest approbation of your conduct. I cannot forbear telling you this, because my situation has given me access to the truth, and I gratify my friendship for you in communicating what cannot fail to gratify your sensibility.

The peace, which exceeds in the goodness of its terms the expectations of the most sanguine, does the highest honor to those who made it. It is the more agreeable, as the time was come when thinking men began to be seriously alarmed at the internal embarrassments and exhausted state of this country. The New England people talk of making you an annual fish-offering, as an acknowledgment of your exertions for the participation of the fisheries. We have now happily concluded the great work of independence, but much remains to be done to reap the fruits of it. Our prospects are not flattering. Every day proves the inefficiency of the present Confederation; yet the common danger being removed, we are receding instead of advancing in a disposition to amend its defects. The road to popularity in each State is to inspire jealousies of the power of Congress, though nothing can be more apparent than that they have no power; and that for the want of it, the resources of the country during the war could not be drawn out, and we at this moment experience all the mischiefs of a bankrupt and ruined credit. It is to be hoped that when prejudice and folly have run themselves out of breath, we may return to reason and correct our errors. After having served in the field during the war, I have been making a short apprenticeship in Congress, but the evacuation of New York approaching, I am preparing to take leave of public life, to enter into the practice of the law. Your country will continue to demand your services abroad. I beg you to present me most respectfully to Mrs. Jay, and to be assured, etc.*

* Reprinted from W. Jay's "Life of John Jay," ii., 122.

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

PRINCETON, July 27, 1783.

SIR:

A few days since I was honored with your Excellency's letter of the———; and was glad to find your ideas on the subject corresponded with mine.

As I shall, in a day or two, take leave of Congress, I think it my duty to give my opinion to the Legislature on a matter of importance to the State, which has been long depending, and is still without a prospect of termination in the train in which it has been placed. I mean the affair of the Grants.* It is hazardous to pass a positive judgment on what will happen in a body so mutable as that of Congress; but, from all I have seen, I have come to a settled opinion that no determination will be taken and executed by them in any other manner than in that prescribed by the Confederation. There is always such a diversity of views and interests, so many compromises to be made between different States, that, in a question of this nature, the embarrassments of which have been increased by the steps that have preceded, and in which the passions of the opposite sides have taken a warm part, decision must be the result of necessity. While Congress have a discretion, they will procrastinate; when they are bound by the Constitution, they must proceed.

It is therefore my opinion that it will be advisable for the Legislature, when they meet, to review the question, and either to relinquish their pretensions to the country in dispute, or to instruct their delegates, if a decision is not had within a limited time, to declare the submission to Congress revoked, and to institute a claim according to the principles of the Confederation.

It would be out of my province to discuss which side of the alternative ought in policy to prevail, but I will take the liberty to observe, that if the last should be preferred, it would be expedient to remove every motive of opposition

* This refers to the dispute as to the territory now forming the State of Vermont.

from private claims, not only by confirming in their full latitude, previous to the trial, the possessions of the original settlers, but even the grants of the usurped government. It may happen that it will be eventually necessary to employ force, and in this case it would be of great importance that neither the inhabitants of the Grants, nor powerful individuals in other States, should find their private interest in contradiction to that of the State. This has already had great influence in counteracting our wishes, would continue to throw impediments in the way of ulterior measures, and might at last kindle a serious flame between the States.

I communicated to your Excellency, in a former letter, that I had declined pressing the application of the Legislature to Congress respecting the State troops for garrisoning the frontier posts, because temporary provision had been made in another way which would save the State the immediate expense, and because there was a prospect of some general provision for the defence of the frontiers on a Continental establishment, which was to be preferred on every account. A report for this purpose is now before Congress, but the thinness of representation has for some time retarded, and still retards, its consideration.

The definitive treaty is not yet arrived, but from accounts which, though not official, appear to deserve credit, it may be daily expected. A gentleman known and confided in, has arrived at Philadelphia, who informs that he saw a letter from Dr. Franklin to Mr. Barkeley, telling him that the definitive treaties were signed the 27th of May between all the parties; that New York was to be evacuated in six months from the ratification of the preliminaries in Europe, which will be the 12th or 15th of next month.

As it is not my intention to return to Congress, I take this opportunity to make my respectful acknowledgments to the Legislature for the honorable mark of their confidence conferred upon me by having chosen me to represent the State in that body. I shall be happy if my conduct has been agreeable to them.

TO WASHINGTON.

ALBANY, September 30, 1783.

DEAR SIR:

As I flatter myself I may indulge a consciousness that my services have been of some value to the public, at least enough to merit the small compensation I wish, I will make no apology to your Excellency for conveying, through you, that wish to Congress. You are able to inform them, if they wish information, in what degree I may have been useful; and I have entire confidence that you will do me justice.

In a letter which I wrote to you several months ago, I intimated that it might be in your power to contribute to the establishment of our Federal Union upon a more solid basis. I have never since explained myself. At the time, I was in hopes Congress might have been induced to take a decisive ground; to inform their constituents of the imperfections of the present system, and of the impossibility of conducting the public affairs, with honor to themselves and advantage to the community, with powers so disproportioned to their responsibility; and, having done this, in a full and forcible manner, to adjourn the moment the definitive treaty was ratified. In retiring at the same juncture, I wished you, in a solemn manner, to declare to the people your intended retreat from public concerns, your opinion of the present government, and of the absolute necessity of a change.

Before I left Congress I despaired of the first, and your circular-letter to the States had anticipated the last. I trust it will not be without effect, though I am persuaded it would have had more, combined with what I have mentioned. At all events, without compliment, sir, it will do you honor with the sensible and well-meaning; and, ultimately, it is to be hoped, with the people at large, when the present epidemic frenzy has subsided.

Mrs. Hamilton presents her compliments to Mrs. Washington.

I beg the favor of your Excellency to forward the enclosed to General Greene.

TO WASHINGTON.

ALBANY, September 30, 1783.

SIR:

I think I may address the subject of this letter to your Excellency with more propriety than to any other person, as it is purely of a military nature, as you are best acquainted with my services as an officer, and as you are now engaged in assisting to form the arrangements for the future peace establishment.

Your Excellency knows that in March, '82, I relinquished all claim to any future compensation for my services, either during the residue of the war, or after its conclusion—simply retaining my rank. On this foundation I build a hope that I may be permitted to preserve my rank, on the peace establishment, without emoluments and unattached to any corps —as an honorary reward for the time I have devoted to the public. As I may hereafter travel, I may find it an agreeable circumstance to appear in the character I have supported in the Revolution.

I rest my claim solely on the sacrifice I have made, because I have no reason to believe that my services have appeared of any value to Congress, as they declined giving them any marks of their notice, on an occasion which appeared to my friends to entitle me to it, as well by the common practice of sovereigns as by the particular practice of this country in repeated instances.

Your Excellency will recollect that it was my lot at York Town to command, as senior officer, a successful attack upon one of the enemy's redoubts; that the officer who acted in a similar capacity in another atttack, made at the same time, by the French troops, has been handsomely distinguished in consequence of it by the government to which he belongs; and that there are several examples among us where Congress have bestowed honors upon actions, perhaps not more useful, nor apparently more hazardous.

These observations are inapplicable to the present Congress, further than as they may possibly furnish an additional motive to a compliance with my wish.

The only thing I ask of your Excellency is, that my application may come into view in the course of the consultations on the peace establishment.

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

ALBANY, October 3, 1783.

SIR:

I have lately received, from Messrs. Duane and L'Hommedieu, an extract of a letter from your Excellency to the delegates, of the the 23d of August last, requesting "a particular detail of the motives which influenced the determination of Congress" respecting the application of the Legislature to have their State troops released from Continental pay, for the purpose of garrisoning the frontier posts.

In my letters to your Excellency of the first of June and twenty-seventh of July, which were intended to be official, I summarily informed you that Congress had made temporary provision for garrisoning the frontier posts, and that a plan was under deliberation relative to a peace establishment, which would, of course, embrace that object permanently; that such temporary provision being made at the common expense, and a general plan being under consideration for the future, I had declined pressing a compliance with the application of the Legislature; conceiving it to be more for the interest of the State that the expense should be jointly borne, than that it should fall exclusively upon itself.

I did not enter into a more full detail upon the subject, because the business continued, to the time I left Congress, in an undecided state, and it was impossible to judge what views would finally prevail.

The concurrent resolutions of the two Houses had been, immediately on their receipt, referred to a committee appointed to report on a peace establishment, who had suspended their report on these resolutions until it should appear what would be the fate of a general plan which had been submitted.

As to the motives that influenced Congress in making the provision they did make, rather than immediately assenting to the application of the State, as far as I was able to collect them, they were these: The opinions of many were unsettled as to the most eligible mode of providing for the security of the frontiers consistent with the Constitution, as well with respect to the general policy of the Union, as to considerations of justice to those States whose frontiers were more immediately exposed. A considerable part of the House appeared to think, from reasons of a very cogent nature, that the well-being of the Union required a federal provision for the security of the different parts, and that it would be a great hardship to individual States peculiarly circumstanced to throw the whole burthen of expense upon them by recurring to separate provisions in a matter, the benefit of which would be immediately shared by their neighbors, and ultimately by the Union at large; that indeed it was not probable particular States would be either able or, *upon experiment*, willing to make competent provision at their separate expense, and that the principle might eventually excite jealousies between the States unfriendly to the common tranquillity.

I freely confess I was one who held this opinion.

Questions naturally arose as to the true construction of the articles of Confederation upon this head; questions as delicate, as interesting, and as difficult of solution.

On one hand it was doubted whether Congress were authorized by the Confederation to proceed upon the idea of a federal provision; on the other, it was perceived that such a contrary construction would be dangerous to the Union, including, among other inconveniences, this consequence, that the United States, in Congress, cannot raise a single regiment, nor equip a single ship, for the general defence, till after the declaration of war, or an actual commencement of hostilities.

In this dilemma, on an important constitutional question, other urgent matters depending before Congress, and the

advanced season requiring a determination upon the mode of securing the Western posts in case of a surrender this fall, all sides of the House concurred in making a temporary provision, in the manner which has been communicated.

My apprehension of the views of the Legislature was simply this: That, looking forward to a surrender of the posts, and conceiving, from some expressions in the articles of Confederation, that separate provision was to be made for the frontier garrisons, they had thought it expedient to apply the troops already on foot to that purpose, and to propose to Congress to give their sanction to it.

Under this apprehension, reflecting besides, that those troops were engaged only for a short period, upon a very improper establishment to continue, on account of the enormous pay to the private men, and that the expense which is now shared by all, and which would have fallen solely upon the State had the application been complied with, would probably be at the rate of nearly eighty thousand dollars per annum, a considerable sum for the State in its present situation—I acknowledge to your Excellency that I saw with pleasure, rather than regret, the turn which the affair took. I shall be sorry, however, if it has contravened the intentions of the Legislature.

I will take the liberty to add upon this occasion that it has always appeared to me of great importance, to this State in particular as well as to the Union in general, that Federal rather than State provision should be made for the defence of every part of the Confederacy, in peace as well as in war.

Without entering into arguments of general policy, it will be sufficient to observe that this State is in all respects *critically situated.*

Its relative position, shape, and intersections, viewed on the map, strongly speak this language: Strengthen the Confederation; give it exclusively the power of the sword; let each State have no forces but its militia.

As a question of mere economy, the following considerations deserve great weight:

The North River facilitates attacks by sea and by land; and, besides the frontier forts, all military men are of opinion that a strong post should be maintained at West Point, or some other position on the lower part of the river.

If Canada is well governed, it may become well peopled, and by inhabitants attached to its government. The British nation, while it preserves the idea of retaining possession of that country, may be expected to keep on foot there a large force. The position of that force, either for defence or offence, will necessarily be such as will afford a prompt and easy access to us.

Our precautions for defence must be proportioned to their means of annoying us, and we may hereafter find it indispensable to increase our frontier garrisons.

The present charge of a competent force in that quarter, thrown additionally into the scale of those contributions which we must make to the payment of the public debt and to other objects of general expense if the Union lasts, would, I fear, enlarge our burden beyond our ability: that charge, hereafter increased as it may be, would be oppressively felt by the people. It includes not only the expense of paying and subsisting the necessary number of troops, but of keeping the fortifications in repair, probably of erecting others, and of furnishing the requisite supplies of military stores. I say nothing of the Indian nations, because, though it will be always prudent to be upon our guard against them, yet I am of opinion we diminish the necessity of it by making them our friends; and I take it for granted there cannot be a serious doubt anywhere as to the obvious policy of endeavoring to do it. Their friendship alone can keep our frontiers in peace. It is essential to the improvement of the fur trade; an object of immense importance to the State. The attempt at the total expulsion of so desultory a people is as chimerical as it would be pernicious. War with them is as expensive as it is destructive. It has not a single object, for the acquisition of their lands is not to be wished till those now vacant are settled;

and the surest, as well as the most just and humane way of removing them, is by extending our settlements to their neighborhood.

Indeed, it is not impossible they may be already willing to exchange their former possessions for others more remote.

The foregoing considerations would lose all force if we had full security that the rest of the world would make our safety and prosperity the first object of their reverence and care; but an expectation of this kind would be too much against the ordinary course of human affairs—too visionary to be a rule for national conduct.

It is true our situation secures us from conquest, if internal dissensions do not open the way; but when nations now make war upon each other, the object seldom is total conquest—partial acquisitions, the jealousy of power, the rivalship of dominion or of commerce, sometimes national emulation and antipathy, are the motives.

Nothing shelters us from the operation of either of these causes. The fisheries, the fur trade, the navigation of the lakes and of the Mississippi, the Western territory, the islands of the West Indies, with reference to traffic,—in short, the passions of human nature, are abundant sources of contention and hostility.

I will not trespass further on your Excellency's patience. I expected indeed that my last letter would have finished my official communications, but Messrs. Duane and L'Hommedieu having transmitted the extract of your letter to Mr. Floyd and myself, in order that we might comply with what your Excellency thought would be expected by the Legislature, it became my duty to give this explanation. Mr. Floyd having been at Congress but a little time after the concurrent resolutions arrived, and being now at a great distance from me, occasions a separate communication.

N. B.—I did not at the time enclose the resolution directing the General to provide for garrisoning the frontier posts,

because I understood it would in course be transmitted to you by the President or the Secretary at War.

TO THE HONORABLE THOMAS MIFFLIN, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

NEW YORK, Dec. 8, 1783.

SIR:

Being concerned as counsel for a number of persons who have been, since the annunciation of the provisional treaty, indicted under the confiscation laws of this State for the part they are supposed to have taken in the late war, we are induced, at the desire of our clients and in their behalf, to apply to Congress, though your Excellency, for an exemplification of the definitive treaty. We take it for granted that ere this it will have been [done under the] direction of the United States. We have found a great strictness in the courts in this State. It will, we apprehend, be necessary to be able to produce an exemplification of the treaty under the seal of the United States. In a matter so interesting to a great number of individuals—for it does not belong to us to urge considerations of national honor,—we hope we shall be excused when we observe that there appears to be no probability that the Legislature of this State will interpose its authority to put a stop to prosecutions till the definitive treaty is announced in form. In the meantime a period is limited for the appearance of the indicted persons to plead to their indictments, and if they neglect to appear, judgment by default will be entered against them. It is therefore of great consequence to them that we should have in our possession as speedily as possible an authentic document of the treaty and of its ratification by Congress; and we, on this account, pray an exemplification of both.

We persuade ourselves that the justice and liberality of Congress will induce a ready compliance with our prayer, which will conduce to the security of a great number of individuals who derive their hopes of safety from the national faith.

TO JOHN BARKER CHURCH.*

NEW YORK, March 10, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR:

In my last to you I informed you that a project for a land bank had been set on foot by Mr. Sayre as the ostensible parent, but I had reason to suspect the Chancellor† was the true father. The fact has turned out as I supposed, and the Chancellor, with a number of others, has since petitioned the Legislature for an exclusive charter for the proposed bank. I thought it necessary not only with a view to your project, but for the sake of the commercial interests of the State, to start an opposition to this scheme, and took occasion to point out its absurdity and inconvenience to some of the most intelligent merchants, who presently saw the matter in a proper light and began to take measures to defeat the plan.

The Chancellor had taken so much pains with the country members that they all began to be persuaded that the land bank was the true philosopher's stone that was to turn all their rocks and trees into gold, and there was great reason to apprehend a majority of the Legislature would have adopted his views. It became necessary to convince the projectors themselves of the impracticability of their scheme, and to counteract the impressions they had

*John Barker Church, who married Angelica Schuyler, the sister of Mrs. Hamilton, was an Englishman by birth, and Lossing ("Life of Schuyler," ii., p. 207) says that his name was Carter, and that he added the Church in this country and dropped it when on a visit to England. There is also a letter signed John Carter, addressed to Hamilton, and dated May 18, 1781, which seems to confirm Lossing. Yet there can be no doubt that here he was known as John Barker Church, because he is so described by Hamilton in a letter to Troup about his will, and Mr. Geo. L. Schuyler, of New York, very kindly writes me that Church was called John Barker in the will of Mr. Schuyler's grandfather, Gen. Schuyler. Church was associated with Col. Wadsworth in furnishing supplies to the French and American armies. Some time after his marriage, according to Lossing, he returned to England, became a member of Parliament, went much into society, and was a friend of the Prince of Wales and in the Carlton House set. He finally returned to New York where he remained until his death at an advanced age.

†The Chancellor was Robert R. Livingston.

made by a direct application to the Legislature. Some of the merchants, to effect these purposes, set on foot a subscription for a money bank, and called upon me to subscribe. I was a little embarrassed how to act, but upon the whole I concluded it best to fall in with them, and endeavor to induce them to put the business upon such a footing as might enable you with advantage to combine your interests with theirs; for since the thing had been taken up upon the broad footing of the whole body of the merchants, it appeared to me that it never would be your interest to pursue a distinct project in opposition to theirs, but that you would prefer, so far as you might choose to employ money in this way, to become purchasers in the general bank. The object, on this supposition, was to have the bank founded on such principles as would give you a proper weight in the direction. Unluckily for this purpose I entered rather late into the measure. Proposals had been agreed upon, in which, among other things, it was settled that no stockholder, to whatever amount, should have more than seven votes, which was the number to which a holder of ten shares was to be entitled. At an after meeting of some of the most influential characters, I engaged them so far to depart from this ground as to allow a vote for every five shares above ten.

The stockholders have since thought proper to appoint me one of the directors.* I shall hold it till Wadsworth and you come out, and if you choose to become partners in this bank, I shall make a vacancy for one of you. I inclose you the constitution and the names of the president, directors, and cashier.

An application for a charter has been made to the Legislature, with a petition against granting an exclusive one to the land bank. The measures which have been taken appear to have had their effect upon the minds of the partisans of the land bank.

The affairs of the bank in Pennsylvania appear to be in some confusion. They have stopped discounts; but I have no apprehension that there is any thing more in the matter

* This bank thus formed was the Bank of New York.

than temporary embarrassment, from having a little overshot their mark in their issues of paper, and from the opposition which the attempt to establish a new bank had produced.

I have had no tolerable offer for your land in Connecticut, —forty shillings, and that currency, per acre has been the highest, but I have written to Mr. Campfield, requesting him to inform himself well of the value of the land, and if he thinks it is not worth more, to accept the offer. I am told he is a judicious and honest man; and I presume the land where it is will never be worth any thing to you if it remains unsold. Betsy joins me in best affections to Mrs. C. and yourself.

TO THOMAS FITZSIMMONS.*

NEW YORK, March 21, 1784.

DEAR SIR:

Permit me to introduce to your acquaintance and attention Mr. Seton, Cashier of the Bank of New York. He is just setting out for Philadelphia to procure materials and information in the forms of business. I recommend him to you, because I am persuaded you will with pleasure facilitate his object. Personally, I dare say you will be pleased with him.

He will tell you of our embarrassments and prospects. I hope an incorporation of the two banks, which is evidently the interest of both, has put an end to differences in Philadelphia. Here a wild and impracticable scheme of a land bank stands in our way; the projectors of it persevering in spite of the experience they have, that all the mercantile and moneyed influence is against it.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, Feb. 21, 1784.

I duly received, my dear sir, your letter of the 27th of January, and I would have sooner told you how much pleasure it gave me, if I had had time, but legislative folly has afforded so plentiful a harvest to us lawyers that we have

* Thomas Fitzsimmons, an eminent merchant of Philadelphia, was afterwards a leading member of Congress and always a stanch supporter and friend of Hamilton.

scarcely a moment to spare from the substantial business of reaping. To-day being Sunday, I have resolved to give an hour to friendship and to you. Good people would say that I had much better be paying my devotions to the *great* *

* * * * * * *

devotions I mean; for with so lively an imagination as yours it is necessary to be explicit, lest you should be for making a different association that would not suit me quite as well.

To say that I was amused with your letter is to say what must have happened of course; a good theme in good hands could not fail to be amusing. The coalition you mention is not to be wondered at, though in a political light it is whimsical enough; but the meeting of extremes at the same point is a common case. I expect in another year to see our political antipodes in this city shaking hands, but whenever it happens it will not affect me as it seems to have done you in the instance you mention, because probably I shall not have the same reasons.—To be serious:

The erection of a new bank in Philadelphia does not appear to me an evil to the community. The competition may indeed render the large profits of the old bank less permanent, but they will always remain considerable enough; and the competition will cause business to be done on easier and better terms in each, to the advancement of trade in general. If I reason wrong, correct me. That a stockholder of the old bank should feel his interest wounded, that those who have made their property in it subservient in some measure to the support of the Revolution should feel a degree of indignation at the kind of rivalship which has started up, are both natural sensations; but that large profits should produce rivalship, that men in a matter of this kind should employ their money where they expect the greatest advantage and the cheapest market in purchasing †

* * * * * * *

second bank *has been* established, I think you will, on reflection, agree with me that they ought to wish to be interested in both the institutions, and that therefore it is the duty of

* There is a slice cut out of the body of the letter here. † MS. cut.

those who have the laying out of their money to purchase in the new bank, on the principle I have hinted at as well as the circumstances of a lower price. The whole of this business, my dear friend, is a mere mercantile speculation, and I am sure when there has been time to cool down the considerate proprietors of the old bank will blame nobody for adventuring upon mere mercantile principles. To you I need not say that it is chimerical to expect any other will prevail.

Were I to advise upon this occasion, it would be as soon as possible to bring about a marriage or, perhaps what you will prefer, an intrigue between the old bank and the new. Let the latter be the wife or, still to pursue your propensity, the mistress of the former. As a mistress (or, you 'll say a wife) it is to be expected she will every now and then be capricious and inconstant; but in the main it will be the interest of both husband and wife that they should live well together and manage their affairs with good humor and concert. If they quarrel they will not only expose themselves to the gibes of their neighbors, but the more knowing part of these will endeavor to keep them by the ears in order to make the favors of each more cheap and more easily attainable.

I ought, in return, to give you an account of what we are doing here, but I will, in the lump, tell you that we are doing those things which we ought not to do, and leaving undone those things which we ought to do. Instead of wholesome regulations for the improvement of our polity and commerce, we are laboring to contrive methods to mortify and punish Tories and to explain away treaties.

Let us both erect a temple to time, only regretting that we shall not command a longer portion of it to see what will be the event of the American drama.*

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, April 7, 1784.

Pardon me, my dear sir, for not sooner having obeyed your orders with respect to the enclosed. I part with it reluctantly; for wit is so rare an article, that when we get so

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

much of it in so small a compass we cannot easily consent to be dispossessed of it. I am very happy to hear of the union of your two banks, for you will believe me when I tell that on more deliberate consideration I was led to view the competition in a different light from that in which it at first struck me. I had no doubt that it was against the interests of the proprietors, but on a superficial view I perceived benefits to the community, which on a more close inspection I found were not real.

You will call our proceedings here *strange doings*. If some folks were paid to counteract the prosperity of the State, they could not take more effectual measures than they do. But it is in vain to attempt to kick against the pricks.

Discrimination bills, partial taxes, schemes to engross public property in the hands of those who have present power, to banish the real wealth of the State, and to substitute paper bubbles, are the only dishes that suit the public palate at this time.

Permit me to ask your opinion on a point of importance to the New York Bank—the best mode of receiving and paying out gold. I am aware of the evils of that which has been practised upon in Philadelphia—*weighing in quantities*—but I cannot satisfy myself about a substitute, unless there could be a coinage.

Favor me with your sentiments on this subject as soon as you can.

TO DE CHASTELLUX.*

NEW YORK, June 14, 1784.

MONSIEUR LE CHEVALIER:

Colonel Clarkson,† who will have the honor of delivering you this, being already known to you, I give him this letter

* François Jean, Marquis de Chastellux, was one of the most distinguished of our French allies; he was born in 1734, and died in 1788. He was something of a literary man, and left, among other works, an entertaining account of his adventures in this country. He became Marquis in the year 1784.

† Colonel Matthew Clarkson, of New York, a distinguished officer of the Revolution, born in 1759; died in 1825. He was aid-de-camp to General Gates, and severely wounded at the battle of Stillwater.

more for the sake of renewing to you the assurances of my attachment and esteem, than from a supposition that he will stand in need of any new title to your attention. I will therefore only say of him that his excellent qualities cannot be known without interesting those to whom they are known, and that from a personal and warm regard for him, I should be happy, if any thing I could say, could be an additional motive for your countenance and civilities to him.

I speak of him in the light of a friend. As a messenger of science, he cannot fail to acquire the patronage of one of her favorite ministers. He combines with the views of private satisfaction, which a voyage to Europe cannot but afford, an undertaking for the benefit of a seminary of learning, lately instituted in this State.

Learning is the common concern of mankind; and why may not poor republicans, who can do little more than wish her well, send abroad to solicit the favor of her patrons and friends? Her ambassador will tell you his errand. I leave it to your mistress to *command* and to the trustees of the institution to *ask* your permission in promoting his mission.

Permit me only to add that if there is any thing in this country by which I can contribute to your satisfaction, nothing will make me happier at all times than that your commands may enable me to give you proofs of the respectful and affectionate attachment with which, etc.

TO HIS BROTHER, JAMES HAMILTON—ST. THOMAS.

NEW YORK, June 23, 1785.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

I have received your letter of the 31st of May last, which and one other are the only letters I have received from you in many years. You did not receive one which I wrote to you about six months ago. The situation you describe yourself to be in gives me much pain, and nothing will make me happier than, as far as may be in my power, to contribute to your relief. I will cheerfully pay your draft upon me for fifty pounds sterling whenever it shall appear. I wish it

was in my power to desire you to enlarge the sum; but, though my future prospects are of the most flattering kind, my present engagements would render it inconvenient to me to advance a larger sum. My affection for you, however, will not permit me to be inattentive to your welfare, and I hope time will prove to you that I feel all the sentiments of a brother. Let me only request of you to exert your industry for a year or two more where you are, and at the end of that time I promise myself to be able to invite you to a more comfortable settlement in this country. But what has become of our dear father? It is an age since I have heard from him, or of him, though I have written him several letters. Perhaps, alas, he is no more, and I shall not have the pleasing opportunity of contributing to render the close of his life more happy than the progress of it. My heart bleeds at the recollection of his misfortunes and embarrassments. Sometimes I flatter myself his brothers have extended their support to him, and that he now enjoys tranquillity and ease. At other times I fear he is suffering in indigence. Should he be alive, inform him of my inquiries; beg him to write to me, and tell him how ready I shall be to devote myself and all I have to his accommodation and happiness. I do not advise your coming to this country at present, for the war has also put things out of order here, and people in your business find a subsistence difficult enough. My object will be, by and by, to get you settled on a farm.*

TO ISRAEL WILKES.†

November 8, 1785.

SIR:

The message which you sent me yesterday, and your letter to-day, were conceived in terms to which I am little accustomed. Were I to consult my feelings only upon the

* Reprinted from the "Reminiscences of Jas. A. Hamilton," p. 2.

† This letter is given in the edition of 1850 as addressed to John Wilkes, but as he was never in this country, the first sentence, "the message which you sent me yesterday and your letter to-day," shows that it could not have been written to John Wilkes, but must have been addressed to some one in New

occasion, I should return an answer very different from that which I have, in justice to my own conduct, resolved upon. But in whatever light we are to view each other hereafter,

York. The following letter, now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department, throws light on the subject.

TO ———.

NEW YORK, June 18, 1784.

SIR:

I have been duly honored with your letter of the 30th of March, and am much flattered by the confidence you have reposed in me. I should with pleasure have undertaken to execute your wishes had I been in a situation that left me at liberty to do it; but it has happened that Mr. Wilkes, some time since, applied to me on the same subject; and though I was not absolutely retained by him, yet as I have been consulted on the business, I should conceive it improper to act against him. In this dilemma, as you were at a great distance, and he might elude your pursuit before you could make a new choice of a person to manage the affair for you, I thought it my duty to transfer the trust to some person on the spot, to whose judgment and integrity your interests might be safely committed. I have fixed upon Mr. Samuel Jones* for this purpose, a gentleman as distinguished for his probity as for his professional knowledge, and have accordingly substituted him in my place.

He has had Mr. Wilkes arrested upon your demand, who, not being able to obtain bail, is of course, in prison. This has been done in pursuance of your intimation that Mr. Wilkes' friends are able to do something for him; and it is to be hoped that, rather than suffer him to be in jail, they will either satisfy or become bound for at least a part of your demand. This seems to be your only resource; for he has no property in this country, and has been of late in no way of acquiring any.

He did not (as you had been informed) accompany Mrs. Hayley† to this country; but it is reported that she has lately arrived at Boston.

I am requested by Mr. Jones to mention to you that it will be necessary you should furnish him with the account of sales rendered by Mr. Wilkes, and, at the same time, with the bills of exchange which he accepted. He wishes to be possessed of these as evidence in case of a controverted suit. You mention that the bills of exchange were sent to New York, but you do not say to whom. On tracing the matter, we have reason to conclude they were sent to Mr. McAdam; but as he is now in England, we cannot have recourse to him to obtain them.

Circumstanced as I am, I must now take leave of this business, without acting hereafter on either side.

* Afterwards Chief Justice of New York, called "the father of the New York Bar," and a very eminent lawyer.

† Mary Wilkes, youngest sister of the famous agitator, married, first, Samuel Stork, merchant, of London; second, George Hayley, alderman. After the death of Mr. Hayley she came to this country, and remained for some time, chiefly in Boston, where she married her third husband, Mr. Jeffreys, with whom she returned to London in 1803.

and however harsh and indelicate I may think the method you have taken to obtain an explanation to be, I shall, for my own part, leave no room to suppose that I intentionally

But as a just representation of facts is always most conducive to the settlement of disputes, and may enable you the better to judge what course it will be proper for you to pursue, I think it incumbent upon me, from the confidence you have been pleased to repose in me, to inform you that I have taken pains to ascertain the quality and condition of the wines of both cargoes on their arrival in this country; and the result of my inquiries of gentlemen who could not be mistaken in the matter, and on whose veracity I can depend, has been that the wine of the second, as well as of the first, cargo was in general either damaged or of indifferent quality, and necessarily sold at very low rates.

I am inclined to suspect that Mr. Wilkes' intention will be to endeavor to procure an act of insolvency in his favor at the next meeting of the Legislature (continuing in the meantime in confinement), and that he will in this expectation rather discourage his friends from becoming sureties for him.

I think, with proper management on the part of those concerned for you, it will be very difficult for him to succeed in this scheme; but moderation in your behalf will be best calculated to frustrate the experiment, and lay him under a necessity of calling in the aid of his friends.

I persuade myself you will do justice to the motives of these intimations, and, though I have it not in my power to serve you upon the present occasion, will permit me to make you an offer of my best services upon every other, and to assure you that I am, with much consideration and esteem, etc.*

WILKES TO HAMILTON.

November 9, 1785.

SIR:

The moment I received yours, I perceived the precipitancy of my own conduct, and was very sorry I had so far mistaken both our characters as to act in the manner I have done. I flatter myself that the same candor which has dic-

* This letter has no address, but is evidently written to some one in England who wished to retain Hamilton as counsel. The allusion to Mrs. Hayley makes it clear that the Mr. Wilkes to whom the letter in the text was addressed was of the agitator's family, while the letter just given shows that it could not have been John Wilkes, as Mr. J. C. Hamilton has it, because an eminent New York lawyer could not have arrested and put in prison in New York a man who was never in this country. It is plain, therefore, that the Mr. Wilkes intended was the eldest brother of the agitator, Israel Wilkes, who came to New York at quite an early age and, with the exception of occasional visits to England, remained there until his death in his eighty-first year. It is impossible now to unravel the details of the affair, and as it was purely a matter of business the letters might have been omitted had not Mr. J. C. Hamilton seen fit to print one of them with what must be a wrong address. I have not been able to determine, or even guess at, Hamilton's would-be client. It may be that he was the Mr. Macaulay mentioned in the letter in the text, but that helps us but little. Mrs. Macaulay, the historian, was in intimate relation with the Wilkes family, and is constantly mentioned in the letters of John Wilkes and his daughter, but her husband was not Mr. but Dr. Macaulay. The most curious thing is that Mr. J. C. Hamilton prints an answer from "John Wilkes," written in reply to Hamilton's of the day before, given above. It is given above.

gave you any cause to complain. I shall, therefore, explicitly declare, that whatever inattention may have appeared towards you, was solely owing to the continual hurry in which my engagements, for a long time past, have kept me; and that, so far from its having been occasioned by any designed neglect, it was what, under the circumstances, might have happened to my best friend. Indeed, much of what you mention to have been done by you, I am a stranger to. The frequent callings, by yourself and by your servant, did not, that I recollect, come to my knowledge. It is possible some of them might have been mentioned to me, and, in the hurry of my mind, forgotten. Once, I remember, I saw your servant just as I was going out on some urgent business. I sent a verbal message, promising that I would see you; which I intended to do, as soon as I had made up my reso-

tated yours will be exerted towards mine, and that you will only view it as the act of a man who conceived himself injured. As you have never experienced the cruel reverses of fortune, you can scarcely judge how the least insinuations to their prejudice will affect those persons who have; or how much more suspicious they are of the behavior of mankind towards them.

The morning I left the message for you I had been called upon by one of the creditors of Mr. Heart, who thought it very strange no dividend was made; and he insinuated some party must be interested in the delay. It is the first money transaction I have engaged in since my release. I felt the insinuation as alluding to me, and with a force which, perhaps, I should not. However, that moment I went to your office.

The next morning, when I saw your note to Mr. Atkinson, and found myself totally set aside in a business where I had, most undoubtedly, been originally neglected, I felt myself very much agitated, and in that frame of mind I wrote my last to you.

So much I thought it necessary to add in explanation.

I am convinced now I have been too hasty, and I am sorry for it. It will put me on my guard in future, and, I make no doubt, prove beneficial to me, provided it has not been the means of hurting me in your estimation, which I am now more desirous than ever of obtaining.

I am, sir, etc.,

JOHN WILKES.*

* I have shown that the Wilkes in question must have been one of the family of the English agitator, and could not have been the agitator himself, but could, and indeed must have been, his brother Israel. Why Mr. J. C. Hamilton should have printed the letter as from John Wilkes cannot be determined. That the original should have been signed "John Wilkes" seems most unlikely.

lution on the business of the interview. When I received your note I was about sending you an answer in writing; but, upon inquiring for your servant, and finding him gone, I omitted it, with an intention to see you personally.

You say it is near six months since you first applied to me on the business in question. A great part of the time I gave you all the answer I could give you—to wit, that I had written to Mr. Macaulay, and only waited his answer. About two months since, I received it. I have been the greater part of the time out of town on indispensable business. In the intervals I have been occupied about objects of immediate and absolute necessity, which could not have been delayed without letting my business run into utter confusion. Mr. Macaulay's concerns have been hanging upon my spirits. I have been promising myself, from day to day, to bring them to a conclusion, but more pressing objects have unavoidably postponed it. I thought the delay required some apology to Mr. Macaulay, but I never dreamt of having given occasion of offence to you.

I will not, however, deny, upon a review of what has passed, that there have been, through hurry and inadvertency on my part, appearances of neglect towards you; but between gentlemen and men of business, unfavorable conclusions ought not to be drawn before explanations are asked. Allowances ought to be made for the situations of parties; and the omissions of men, deeply involved in business, ought rather to be ascribed to that cause than to ill intentions.

Had you, in the first instance, expressed to me (in such a manner as respect for yourself and delicacy to me dictated) your sense of these appearances, I should have taken pains to satisfy you that nothing improper towards you was intended by me. But to make one of my clerks the instrument of communication, and the bearer to me of a harsh accusation, was ill-judged and ungenteel. To take it for granted that you had received an injury from me, without first giving me an opportunity of an explanation, and to couch your sense of it in terms so offensive as some of those

used in your letter, is an additional instance of precipitation and rudeness.

Inadvertencies susceptible of misapprehension, I may commit; but I am incapable of intending to wound or injure any man who has given me no cause for it; and I am incapable of doing any thing, sir, of which I need be ashamed. The intimation, on your part, is unmerited and unwarrantable. After thus having explained my own conduct to you, and given you my ideas of yours, it will depend on yourself how far I shall be indifferent, or not, to your future sentiments of my character. I shall only add, that to-morrow you shall receive from me my determination on the matter of business between us.

TO WASHINGTON.

November 23, 1785.

DEAR SIR:

Major Fairly is just setting out on a visit to you, I believe, on some business relating to the Cincinnati. The society of this State met some short time since, and took into consideration the proposed alterations in the original frame of the Institution; some were strenuous for adhering to the old constitution, a few adopting the new, and many for a middle line. This disagreement of opinion and the consideration that the different State societies pursuing different courses—some adopting the alterations entire, others rejecting them in the same way, others adopting in part and rejecting in part—might beget confusion and defeat good purposes, induced a proposal which was unanimously agreed to, that a committee should be appointed to prepare and lay before the society a circular-letter expressive of the sense of the society on the different alterations proposed, and recommending the giving powers to a general meeting of the Cincinnati, to make such alterations as might be thought advisable to obviate objections and promote the interests of the society. I believe there will be no difficulty in agreeing to change the present mode of continuing the society; but

it appears to be the wish of our members that some other mode may be defined and substituted, and that it might not be left to the uncertainty of legislative provision. We object, too, to putting the funds under legislative direction. Indeed, it appears to us, the Legislatures will not at present be inclined to give us any sanction.

I am of the committee, and I cannot but flatter myself that when the object is better digested and more fully explained it will meet your approbation.

The poor *Baron* * is still soliciting Congress, and has every prospect of indigence before him. He has his imprudences, but, upon the whole, he has rendered valuable services, and his merits and the reputation of the country alike demand that he should not be left to suffer want.

If there could be any mode by which your influence could be employed in his favor, by writing to your friends in Congress, or otherwise, the Baron and his friends would be under great obligations to you.

TO NATHANIEL HAZARD.

April 24, 1786.

SIR:

Your letter of the 21st was only delivered me this morning. The good opinion of liberal men I hold in too high estimation not to be flattered by that part of your letter which relates to me personally. The other part I have communicated to General Schuyler, and he assures me he will see all his friends this afternoon upon the subject; so that I have no doubt, as far as his influence extends, it will be employed in favor of the success of the bill in the Assembly, as it has already been in the Senate.

In taking this step, however, I would not be understood to declare any opinion concerning the principles of the bill, with which I am not sufficiently acquainted to form a decided opinion. I have merely made your letter the occasion

* Steuben.

of introducing the subject to General Schuyler, whose sentiments are as favorable to your wishes as you could desire.

I make this observation from that spirit of candor which I hope will always direct my conduct. I am aware that I have been represented as an enemy to the wishes of what you call your corps. If by this has been meant that I do not feel as much as any man, not immediately interested, for the distresses of those merchants who have been in a great measure the victims of the Revolution, the supposition does not do justice either to my head or my heart. But if it means that I have always viewed the mode of relieving them as a matter of peculiar delicacy and difficulty, it is well founded.

I should have thought it unnecessary to enter into this explanation, were it not that I am held up as a candidate at the ensuing election; and I would not wish that the step I have taken in respect to your letter should be considered as implying more than it does; for I would never wish to conciliate at the expense of candor. On the other hand, I confide in your liberality not to infer more than I intend from the explanation I have given; and hope you will believe me to be, with great cordiality and esteem, etc.

TO MESSRS. SEMPHILL & CO.

NEW YORK, May 20, 1786.

GENTLEMEN:

On the recommendation of Mr. Nicholas Cruger,* of this city, I take the liberty to commit to your care a small matter in which I am interested. I am informed that Mr. John Hallwood, a relation of mine, who died some time since in St. Croix, has, by his will, left me one-fourth part of his estate. The amount, I imagine, is not very considerable, but, whatever it may be, I shall be glad to have it collected and remitted. Mr. Hallwood's estate, I believe, consisted entirely in his share in his grandfather's estate, Mr. James Lytton,† whose affairs have been a long time in a

* Hamilton's early friend and employer.

† Mr. Hallwood's grandfather was Mr. James Lytton, as it here appears, and

dealing [sic] court, but one would hope are now ready for a final settlement. Dr. Hugh Knox can give you further information on the subject.

As I know money concerns in your island rarely improve by delay, if things should not be in a train to admit of an immediate settlement, I shall be ready, to effect this, to transfer my claim to any person who may incline to the purchase at a discount of five and twenty per cent.

This, however, I submit to your discretion, and authorize you to do whatever you think for my interest. Inclosed I send you a power of attorney, which I presume you will find competent. Should it be in my power to render you any services here, I shall with pleasure obey your commands.

TO JOHN THOMAS, ESQ., SHERIFF OF WESTCHESTER.

NEW YORK, June 22, 1786.

SIR:

I think it necessary to apprise you that in my opinion you will not be safe in taking paper money on executions, without the consent of the parties, and in those which I have sent to you that consent I believe cannot be obtained.

This is a matter, however, which I mention to you in confidence, for your own safety. I would not wish to have much said about it till you should be under a necessity of explaining yourself, lest it should injure the credit of the paper on its first appearance, to which (whatever be my opinion of the measure itself since it has been adopted) I would not wish to be accessory.*

Mr. Hallwood was a relative of Hamilton. In the appendix to my Life of Hamilton (American Statesmen Series), p. 294, I have discussed, in connection with the question of his parentage, his relationship to the Lyttons. This letter tends to show that, if the view then suggested is probable, Hamilton's mother was a Miss Lytton, and not Miss Faucette. This letter is valuable only on this account, for it proves beyond a peradventure Hamilton's relationship to the Lyttons, which is mentioned by Mr. John C. Hamilton in the first and unfinished Life, but which is omitted in the "History of the Republic."

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK July 3, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

In my passage through the Jerseys, and since my arrival here, I have taken particular pains to discover the public sentiment, and I am more and more convinced that this is the critical opportunity for establishing the prosperity of this country on a solid foundation. I have conversed with men of information, not only in this city, but from different parts of the State, and they agree that there has been an astonishing revolution for the better in the minds of the people.

The prevailing apprehension among thinking men is, that the Convention, from the fear of shocking the popular opinion, will not go far enough. They seem to be convinced that a strong, well-mounted government will better suit the popular palate than one of a different complexion. Men in office are indeed taking all possible pains to give an unfavorable impression of the Convention, but the current seems to be moving strongly the other way.

A plain but sensible man, in a conversation I had with him yesterday, expressed himself nearly in this manner: The people begin to be convinced that "their excellent form of government," as they have been used to call it, will not answer their purpose, and that they must substitute something not very remote from that which they have lately quitted.

These appearances, though they will not warrant a conclusion that the people are yet ripe for such a plan as I advocate, yet serve to prove that there is no reason to despair of their adopting one equally energetic, if the Convention should think proper to propose it. They serve to prove that we ought not to allow too much weight to objections drawn from the supposed repugnance of the people to an efficient constitution. I confess I am more and more inclined to believe that former habits of thinking are regaining their influence with more rapidity than is generally imagined.

Not having compared ideas with you, sir, I cannot judge

how far our sentiments agree; but, as I persuade myself the genuineness of my representations will receive credit with you, my anxiety for the event of the deliberations of the Convention induces me to make this communication of what appears to be the tendency of the public mind.

I own to you, sir, that I am seriously and deeply distressed at the aspect of the counsels which prevailed when I left Philadelphia. I fear that we shall let slip the golden opportunity of rescuing the American empire from disunion, anarchy, and misery.

No motley or feeble measure can answer the end, or will finally receive the public support. Decision is true wisdom, and will be not less reputable to the Convention than salutary to the community.

I shall of necessity remain here ten or twelve days. If I have reason to believe that my attendance at Philadelphia will not be mere waste of time, I shall, after that period, rejoin the Convention.

TO ———.*

NEW YORK, ———. 1787.

DEAR SIR:

Agreeably to what passed between us, I have had an interview with Mr. Auldjo, and I flatter myself if there is (as I doubt not there will be) as much moderation on the part of Major Peirce as there appears to be on that of Mr. Auldjo, that the affair between them may yet be amicably terminated.

But Mr. Auldjo observes, I confess in my opinion with propriety, that he ought to know with some precision the matters which have given offence to Major Peirce, before he can enter into explanations, which he declares himself to be very ready to do with coolness and candor the moment he shall be enabled to do it by a specification of the subjects of complaint. If a personal interview is for any reason disa-

* Addressed presumably to the second of Major Peirce in the affair of honor which seems to have been impending between that gentleman and Hamilton's friend Mr. Auldjo.

greeable to Major Peirce, I entreat you, my dear sir, to obtain from him and to communicate to me by letter the substance of what has occasioned his dissatisfaction, with so much particularity only as will put it in the power of Mr. Auldjo to give an explicit answer. Major Peirce will, I hope, have no scruples about this, for as the door of explanation has been opened by Mr. Auldjo, there is no punctilio which stands in his way; and I trust he will feel the force of a sentiment which prudence and humanity equally dictate, that extremities ought then only to ensue when after a fair experiment accommodation has been found impracticable. An attention to this principle interests the characters of both the gentlemen concerned, and with them our own, and from every other consideration, as well as that of personal friendship to the parties, I sincerely wish to give it its full operation. I am convinced you are not less anxious to effect this than myself, and I trust our joint endeavors will not prove unsuccessful.

I cannot, however, conclude without making one remark. Though Mr. Auldjo has expressed and still entertains a desire of explanation, it would ill become him to solicit it. Whatever therefore in my expressions may seem to urge such an explanation with the earnestness of entreaty, must be ascribed to my own feelings and to that inclination which every man of sensibility must feel—not to see extremities take place if it be in his power to prevent them, or until they become an absolutely necessary sacrifice to public opinion.

TO MAJOR PEIRCE.

1787.

DEAR SIR:

As the enclosed contains details relating to your private affairs, it is judged most delicate to put it under cover to you. Permit me to use the privilege of a friend to say, that what has appeared to you offensive in the conduct of Mr. Auldjo, seems to have been a very natural result of disappointments on his side, to which your disappointments gave birth, influ-

enced too, perhaps, in some degree by incidents which may have been misrepresented or misunderstood. His explanations speak a language which I sincerely think may put an end to your controversy—I as sincerely hope this may be the case. I speak with the more freedom, because in a difference between men I esteem—a difference evidently foreign from any real enmity between them,—I can never consent to take up the character of a second in a duel till I have in vain tried that of the mediator. Be content with *enough*, for *more* ought not to be expected.*

TO AULDJO.

NEW YORK, July 26, 1787.

SIR:

I have delivered the paper you committed to me, as it stood altered, to Major Peirce, from whose conduct I am to conclude the affair between you is at an end. He informs me that he is shortly to set out on a jaunt up the North River.

As you intimate a wish to have my sentiments in writing on the transaction, I shall with pleasure declare that the steps you have taken in consequence of Mr. Peirce's challenge have been altogether in conformity to my opinion of what would be prudent, proper, and honorable on your part. They seem to have satisfied Mr. Peirce's scruples arising from what he apprehended in some particulars to have been your conduct to him, and I presume we are to hear nothing further of the matter.

TO RUFUS KING.†

NEW YORK, August 20, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

Since my arrival here I have written to my colleagues, informing them if either of them would come down, I would accompany him to Philadelphia; so much for the sake of propriety and public opinion.

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

† The eminent statesman of Massachusetts and New York. He was always one of Hamilton's most intimate friends.

In the meantime, if any material alteration should happen to be made in the plan now before the Convention, I will be obliged to you for a communication of it. I will also be obliged to you to let me know when your conclusion is at hand, for I would choose to be present at that time.

TO COLONEL JEREMIAH WADSWORTH.*

August 20, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR:

The inclosed is said to be the copy of a letter circulating in your State. The history of its appearance among us is that it was sent by one *Whitmore*, of Stratford, formerly in the Paymaster-General's office, to one James Reynolds of this city.

I am at a loss clearly to understand its object, and have some suspicion that it has been fabricated to excite jealousy against the Convention, with a view to an opposition to their recommendations. At all events, I wish, if possible, to trace its source, and send it to you for that purpose.

Whitmore must of course say where he got it, and by pursuing the information, we may at last come at the author. Let me know the political connections of this man and the complexion of the people most active in the circulation of the letter. Be so good as to attend to this inquiry somewhat particularly, as I have different reasons of some moment for setting it on foot.

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, August 28, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote you some days since to request you to inform me when there was a prospect of your finishing, as I intended to be with you for certain reasons before the conclusion.

* Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth, of Connecticut, Commissary-General in the Revolutionary army, delegate to the Continental, and member of the National, Congress. By his reply to this letter it appears that the person whom Hamilton calls Whitmore was named Wetmore.

It is whispered here that some late changes in your scheme have taken place which give it a higher tone. Is this the case? I leave town to-day to attend a circuit in a neighboring county, from which I shall return the last of the week, and shall be glad to find a line from you explanatory of the period of the probable termination of your business.

TO WASHINGTON.

October, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

You probably saw some time since some animadversions on certain expressions of Governor Clinton respecting the Convention. You may have seen a piece signed "A Republican," attempting to bring the fact into question, and endeavoring to controvert the conclusions drawn from it, if true. My answer you will find in the inclosed. I trouble you with it merely from that anxiety which is natural to every man, to have his veracity at least stand in a fair light. The matter seems to be given up by the Governor, and the fact, with the inferences from it, stand against him in full force and operate as they ought to do.

It is, however, of some importance to the party to diminish whatever credit or influence I may possess, and to effect this they stick at nothing. Among many contemptible artifices practised by them they have had recourse to an insinuation that I *palmed* myself upon you, and that you *dismissed* me from your family.* This I confess hurts my feelings, and if it obtains credit, will require a contradiction.

You, sir, will undoubtedly recollect the manner in which I came into your family and went out of it, and know how destitute of foundation such insinuations are. My confidence in your justice will not permit me to doubt your readiness to put the matter in its true light in your answer

* In his reply to this letter, Washington says: "But as you say it is insinuated by some of your political adversaries and may obtain public credit, 'that you *palmed* yourself upon me and was *dismissed* from my family,' and call upon me to do you justice by a recital of the facts, I do therefore explicitly declare that both charges are entirely unfounded."

to this letter. It cannot be my wish to give any complexion to the affair which might excite the least scruple in you, but I confess it would mortify me to be under the imputation either of having obtruded myself into the family of a General or of having been turned out of it.

The new Constitution is as popular in this city as it is possible for any thing to be, and the prospect thus far is favorable to it throughout the State. But there is no saying what turn things may take when the full flood of official influence is let loose against it. This is to be expected; for, though the Governor has not publicly declared himself, his particular connections and confidential friends are loud against it.

Mrs. Hamilton joins in respectful compliments to Mrs. Washington.

TO WASHINGTON.

October 30, 1787.

I am much obliged to your Excellency for the explicit manner in which you contradict the insinuations mentioned in my last letter. The only use I shall make of your answer will be to put it into the hands of a few friends.

The constitution proposed has in this State warm friends and warm enemies. The first impressions everywhere are in its favor, but the artillery of its opponents makes some impression. The event cannot yet be foreseen. The inclosed is the first number of a series of papers to be written in its defence. *

I send you also, at the request of the Baron de Steuben, a printed pamphlet containing the grounds of an application lately made to Congress. He tells me there is some reference to you, the object of which he does not himself seem clearly to understand, but imagines it may be in your power to be of service to him.

There are public considerations that induce me to be somewhat anxious for his success. He is fortified with

* This allusion is to "The Federalist."

materials which, in Europe, could not fail to establish the belief of the contract he alleges. The documents of service he possesses are of a nature to convey an exalted idea of them. The compensations he has received, though considerable, if compared with those which have been received by American officers, will, according to European ideas, be very scanty in application to a *stranger* who is acknowledged to have rendered essential services. Our reputation abroad is not at present too high. To dismiss an old soldier empty and hungry, to seek the bounty of those on whom he has no claims, and to complain of unkind returns and violated engagements, will certainly not tend to raise it. I confess, too, there is something in my feelings which would incline me in this case to go further than might be strictly necessary, rather than drive a man, at the Baron's time of life, who has been a faithful servant, to extremities. And this is unavoidable if he does not succeed in his present attempt. What he asks would, all calculations made, terminate in this: an allowance of his five hundred and eighty guineas a year. He only wishes a recognition of the contract. He knows that until affairs mend no money can be produced. I do not know how far it may be in your power to do him any good, but I shall be mistaken if the considerations I have mentioned do not appear to your Excellency to have some weight.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

NEW YORK, April 3, 1788.

I have been very delinquent, my dear sir, in not thanking you for your letter from Philadelphia. The remarks you made on a certain subject are important, and will be attended to.

There is truly much embarrassment in the case.

I think, however, the principles we have talked of are not only just, but will apply to the other departments. Nor will the consequences appear so disagreeable as they may seem

at first sight, when we attend to the true import of the rule established. The States *retain* all the authorities they were before possessed of, not alienated in the three modes pointed out; but this does not include cases which are the creatures of the new Constitution. For instance, the crime of treason against the United States *immediately* is a crime known only to the new Constitution. There of course *was* no power in the State constitutions to pardon that crime. There will therefore be none under the new, etc. This is something likely, it seems to me, to afford the best solution of the difficulty. I send you the Federalist from the beginning to the conclusion of the commentary on the Executive Branch. If our suspicions of the author be right, he must be too much engaged to make a rapid progress in what remains. The Court of Chancery and a Circuit Court are now sitting.

We are told that your election has succeeded, with which we all felicitate ourselves. I will thank you for an account of the result generally. In this State our prospects are much as you left them. A moot point which side will prevail. Our friends to the northward are active.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

May 4, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

I believe I am in your debt a letter or two, which is owing to my occupation in relation to the elections, etc.

These are now over in this State, but the result is not known. All depends upon Albany, where both sides claim the victory. Our doubts will not be removed till the latter end of the month. I hope your expectations of Virginia have not diminished.

Respecting the first volume of Publius I have executed your commands. The books have been sent addressed to the care of Governor Randolph. The second, we are informed, will be out in the course of a week, and an equal number shall be forwarded. Inclosed is a letter, committed

to my care by Mr. Vanderkemp, which I forward with pleasure.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, May 19, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

I acknowledge my delinquency in not thanking you before for your obliging letter from Richmond. But the truth is that I have been so overwhelmed in avocations of one kind or another, that I have scarcely had a moment to spare to a friend. You I trust will be the less disposed to be inexorable, as I hope you will believe there is no one for whom I have more *inclination* than yourself—I mean of the *male* kind.

Your account of the situation of Virginia was interesting, and the present appearances as represented here justify your conjectures. It does not however appear that the adoption of the Constitution can be considered as out of doubt in that State. Its conduct upon the occasion will certainly be of critical importance.

In this State, as far as we can judge, the elections have gone wrong. The event, however, will not certainly be known till the end of the month. Violence rather than moderation is to be looked for from the opposite party. Obstinacy seems the prevailing trait in the character of its leader. The language is that if all the other States adopt, this is to persist in refusing the Constitution. It is reduced to a certainty that Clinton has in several conversations declared the *Union* unnecessary—though I have the information through channels which do not permit a public use to be made of it.

We have, notwithstanding this unfavorable complexion of things, two sources of hope: one, the chance of a ratification by nine States before we decide, and the influence of this upon the firmness of the *followers;* the other, the probability of a change of sentiment in the people, auspicious to the Constitution.

The current has been for some time running towards it; though the whole flood of official influence, accelerated by a torrent of falsehood, early gave the public opinion so violent a direction in a wrong channel that it was not possible suddenly to alter its course. This is a mighty stiff simile; but you know what I mean; and after having started it, I did not choose to give up the chase.

The members of the Convention in this city, by a majority of nine or ten to one, will be: John Jay, Robert R. Livingston, Richard Morris, John Sloss Hobart, James Duane, Isaac Roosevelt, Richard Harrison, Nicholas Low, Alexander Hamilton.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

NEW YORK, May 19, 1788.

Some days since I wrote to you, my dear sir, inclosing a letter from a Mr. Vanderkemp, etc.

I then mentioned to you that the question of a majority for or against the Constitution would depend upon the County of Albany. By the later accounts from that quarter, I fear much that the issue there has been against us.

As Clinton is truly the leader of his party, and is inflexibly obstinate, I count little on overcoming opposition by reason. Our only chances will be the previous ratification by nine States, which may shake the firmness of his followers; and a change in the sentiments of the people, which have, for some time, been travelling towards the Constitution, though the first impressions, made by every species of influence and artifice, were too strong to be eradicated in time to give a decisive turn to the elections. We shall leave nothing undone to cultivate a favorable disposition in the citizens at large.

The language of the Anti-federalists is, that if all the other States adopt, New York ought still to hold out. I have the most direct intelligence, but in a manner which forbids a public use being made of it, that Clinton has, in several conversations, declared his opinion of the *inutility*

of the UNION. It is an unhappy reflection that the friends to it should, by quarrelling for straws among themselves, promote the designs of its adversaries. We think here that the situation of your State is critical. Let me know what you now think of it. I believe you meet nearly at the time we do. It will be of vast importance that an exact communication should be kept up between us at that period; and the moment *any decisive* question is taken, if favorable, I request you to dispatch an express to me, with pointed orders to make all possible diligence, by changing horses, etc. All expense shall be thankfully and liberally paid. I executed your commands respecting the first volume of the Federalist. I sent forty of the common copies and twelve of the finer ones, addressed to the care of Governor Randolph. The printer announces the second volume in a day or two, when an equal number of the two kinds shall also be forwarded. He informs that the Judicial Department—Trial by Jury—Bill of Rights, etc., is discussed in some additional papers which have not yet appeared in the Gazettes.

TO JOHN SULLIVAN, ESQ., PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

NEW YORK, June 6, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

You will no doubt have understood that the Anti-federal party has prevailed in this State by a large majority. It is therefore of the utmost importance that all external circumstances should be made use of to influence their conduct. This will suggest to you the *great advantage* of a speedy decision in your State, if you can be sure of the question, and a prompt communication of the event to us. With this view, permit me to request that the instant you have taken a decisive vote in favor of the Constitution, you send an express to me at Poughkeepsie. Let him take the *shortest route* to that place, change horses on the road, and use all possible diligence. I shall with pleasure defray all expenses,

and give a liberal reward to the person. As I suspect an effort will be made to precipitate us, all possible *safe* dispatch on your part, as well to obtain a decision as to communicate the intelligence of it, will be desirable.*

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

NEW YORK, June 8, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

In my last, I think, I informed you that the elections had turned out, beyond expectation, favorable to the Antifederal party. They have a majority of two thirds in the Convention, and, according to the best estimate I can form, of about four sevenths in the community. The views of the leaders in this city are pretty well ascertained to be turned towards a *long* adjournment—say, till next spring or summer. Their incautious ones observe that this will give an opportunity to the State to *see how* the government works, and to act according to *circumstances*.

My reasonings on the fact are to this effect: The leaders of the party hostile to the Constitution are equally hostile to the Union. They are, however, afraid to reject the Constitution at once, because that step would bring matters to a crisis between this State and the States which had adopted the Constitution, and between the parties in the State. A separation of the Southern District from the other parts of the State, it is perceived, would become the object of the Federalists and of the neighboring States. They therefore resolve upon a long adjournment as the safest and most artful course to effect their final purpose. They suppose that when the government gets into operation, it will be obliged to take some steps in respect to revenue, etc., which will furnish topics of declamation to its enemies in the several States, and will strengthen the minorities. If any considerable discontent should show itself, they will stand ready to head the opposition. If, on the contrary, the thing should

* This interesting letter, now first printed, I owe to the kindness of Mr. George Clarendon Hodges, of Boston, the possessor of the original.

go on smoothly, and the sentiments of our own people should change, they can elect to come into the Union. They, at all events, take the chances of time and the chapter of accidents.

How far their friends in the country will go with them, I am not able to say, but, as they have always been found very obsequious, we have little reason to calculate upon an uncompliant temper in the present instance. For my own part, the more I can penetrate the views of the Anti-federal party in this State, the more I dread the consequences of the non-adoption of the Constitution by any of the other States—the more I fear an eventual disunion and civil war. God grant that Virginia may accede. The example will have a vast influence on our politics. New Hampshire, all accounts give us to expect, will be an assenting State.

The number of the volumes of the Federalist which you desired have been forwarded, as well the second as the first, to the care of Governor Randolph. It was impossible to correct a certain error.

In a former letter, I requested you to communicate to me, by express, the event of any decisive question in favor of the Constitution, authorizing changes of horses, etc., with an assurance to the person that he will be liberally paid for his diligence.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

POUGHKEEPSIE, June, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 20th came to hand two days since. I regret that your prospects are not yet reduced to greater certainty. There is more and more reason to believe that our conduct will be influenced by yours.

Our discussions have not yet travelled beyond the power of taxation. To-day we shall probably quit this ground to pass to another. Our arguments confound, but do not convince. Some of the leaders, however, appear to be convinced by *circumstances*, and to be desirous of a retreat. This does

not apply to the chief, who wishes to establish Clintonism on the basis of Anti-federalism.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

POUGHKEEPSIE, June 21, 1788.

Yesterday, my dear sir, the Convention made a House. That day and this have been spent in preliminary arrangements. To-morrow we go into a committee of the whole on the Constitution. There is every appearance that a full discussion will take place, which will keep us together at least a fortnight. It is not easy to conjecture what will be the result. Our adversaries greatly outnumber us. The leaders gave indications of a pretty desperate disposition in private conversations previous to the meeting; but I imagine the minor partisans have their scruples, and an air of moderation is now assumed. So far the thing is not despaired of. A happy issue with you must have a considerable influence upon us. I have time to add nothing more than the assurance of my sincere attachment.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

POUGHKEEPSIE, June 21, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your letter of the 9th instant, and am glad to learn that you think the chance is in your favor. I hope no disagreeable change may appear. Yet, I own I fear something from your indisposition.

Our debate here began on the clause respecting the proportion of representation, etc., which has taken up two days. To-morrow, I imagine, we shall talk about the power over elections. The only good information I can give you is, that we shall be some time together, and take the chance of events.

The object of the party at present is undoubtedly conditional amendments. What effect events may have cannot precisely be foreseen. I believe the adoption by New Hampshire is certain.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Friday morning, June 27, 1788.

A day or two ago General Schuyler, at my request, sent forward to you an express with an account of the adoption of the Constitution by New Hampshire. We eagerly wait for further intelligence from you, as our chance of success depends upon you. There are some slight symptoms of relaxation in some of the leaders, which authorizes a gleam of hope, if you do well, but certainly I think not otherwise.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

July 8, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

I felicitate you sincerely on the event in Virginia, but my satisfaction will be allayed if I discover too much facility in the business of amendment-making. I fear the system will be wounded in some of its vital parts by too general a concurrence in some very injudicious recommendations. I allude more particularly to the power of taxation. The more I consider *requisition* in any shape, the more I am out of humor with it. We yesterday passed through the Constitution. To-day some definitive proposition is to be brought forward, but what, we are at a loss to judge. We have good reason to believe that our opponents are not agreed, and this affords some ground of hope. Different things are thought of—*conditions precedent*, or previous amendments; *conditions subsequent*, or the proposition of amendments, upon condition that if they are not adopted within a limited time, the State shall be at liberty to *withdraw* from the Union; and, lastly, *recommendatory amendments*. In either case, *constructive declarations* will be carried as far as possible. We will go as far as we can in the latter without invalidating the act, and will concur in rational recommendations. The rest for our opponents. We are informed there has been a disturbance in the city of Albany, on the 4th of July, which has occasioned bloodshed. The Antifederalists were the aggressors, and the Federalists the vic-

tors. Thus stand our accounts at present. We trust, however, the matter has passed over, and tranquillity been restored.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Saturday, July, 1788.

I thank you, my dear sir, for yours by the post. Yesterday I communicated to Duer our situation, which I presume he will have communicated to you. It remains exactly the same. No further question having been taken, I fear the footing I mentioned to Duer is the best upon which it can be placed, but every thing possible will yet be attempted to bring the party from that stand to an unqualified ratification. Let me know your idea upon the possibility of our being received on that plan. You will understand that the only qualification will be the *reservation* of a right to recede in case our amendments have not been decided upon in one of the modes pointed out by the Constitution, within a certain number of years, perhaps five or seven. If this can, in the first instance, be admitted as a ratification, I do not fear any further consequences. Congress will, I presume, recommend certain amendments to render the *structure* of the government more secure. This will satisfy the more considerate and honest opposers of the Constitution, and with the aid of them will break up the party.

TO NATHANIEL CHIPMAN.*

POUGHKEEPSIE, July 22, 1788.

SIR:

Your brother delivered me your favor, which I received with pleasure, as the basis of a correspondence that may be productive of public good.

* Nathaniel Chipman, of Vermont, was born in Connecticut, in 1752, and died in 1843. He was a soldier of the Revolution and a distinguished lawyer and statesman. He was Chief-Justice of Vermont and Senator from that State. The letter to which this is a reply related to the question of the New York grants. In 1789 Mr. Chipman was appointed to settle the differences with New York, and two years later was one of the Commissioners to arrange for the admission of Vermont into the Union.

The accession of Vermont to the Confederacy is, doubtless, an object of great importance to the whole; and it appears to me that this is the favorable moment for effecting it upon the best terms for all concerned. Besides mere general reasons, there are circumstances of the moment which will forward a proper arrangement. One of the first subjects of deliberation with the new Congress will be the independence of Kentucky, for which the Southern States will be anxious. The Northern will be glad to send a counterpoise in Vermont. These mutual interests and inclinations will facilitate a proper result.

I see nothing that can stand in your way but the interfering claims under the grants of New York. As to taxation, the natural operation of the new system will place you exactly where you might wish to be. The public debt, as far as it can prudently be provided for, will be by the Western lands and the appropriation of some general fund. *There will be no distribution of it to particular parts of the community.* The fund will be sought for in indirect taxation; as for a number of years, and except in time of war, direct taxes would be an impolitic measure. Hence, as you can have no objection to your proportion of contribution as consumers, you can fear nothing from the article of taxation.

I readily conceive that it will hardly be practicable to you to come into the Union, unless you are secured from claims under New York grants. Upon the whole, therefore, I think it will be expedient for you, as early as possible, to ratify the Constitution, "upon condition that Congress shall provide for the extinguishment of all existing claims to land under grants of the State of New York, which may interfere with claims under the grants of the State of Vermont." You will do well to conform your boundary to that heretofore marked out by Congress, otherwise insuperable difficulties would be likely to arise with this State.

I should think it altogether unadvisable to annex any

other conditions to your ratification, for there is scarcely any of the amendments proposed that will not have a party opposed to it, and there are several that will meet with a very strong opposition; and it would, therefore, be highly inexpedient for you to embarrass your main object by any collateral difficulties.

As I write in Convention, I have it not in my power to enlarge. You will perceive my general ideas on the subject. I will only add that it will be wise to lay as little impediment as possible in the way of your reception into the Union.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

POUGHKEEPSIE, July 22, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote to you by the last post, since which nothing material has turned up here. We are debating on amendments without having decided what is to be done with them. There is so great a diversity in the views of our opponents that it is impossible to predict any thing. Upon the whole, however, our fears diminish.

TO SAMUEL BROOME.*

NEW YORK, August 16, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

I have this moment received your letter of the thirteenth instant, and am sorry that the rules of propriety in respect to my situation as a member of Congress will not permit my acting in the capacity you wish.

My situation for some time past has prevented my acknowledging one or two of your favors, which have been duly handed to me. I recollect that one of them contains an inquiry concerning your son, to which you will naturally desire an answer. My public avocations for some time past have put it out of my power to ascertain the progress he has made—though I expect when I shall be enough dis-

* A New York merchant, and one of the well-known family of that name.

engaged to examine, to find it a good one; it cannot fail to be so if his diligence has been equal to his capacity. I shall shortly write you further on the subject.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, August 13, 1788.

SIR:

Capt. Cochran of the British navy has requested my aid in recovering a family watch worn by his brother, who fell at Yorktown, and now in the possession of Gen. Morgan. In compliance with his request I have written the letter herewith to Gen. Morgan, which I take the liberty to convey through you, in hope that if you see no impropriety in it, you would add your influence to the endeavor to gratify Capt. Cochran. It is one of those things in which the affections are apt to be interested, beyond the value of the object, and in which one naturally feels an inclination to oblige.

I have delivered to Mr. Madison, to be forwarded to you, a set of the papers under the signature of Publius,* neatly enough bound to be honored with a place in your library. I presume you have understood that the writers of these papers are chiefly Mr. Madison and myself, with some aid from Mr. Jay.

I take it for granted, sir, you have concluded to comply with what will no doubt be the general call of your country in relation to the new government. You will permit me to say that it is indispensable you should lend yourself to its first operations. It is of little purpose to have *introduced* a system, if the weightiest influence is not given to its firm *establishment* in the outset.

TO GOVERNOR WM. LIVINGSTON.

NEW YORK, August 29, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

We are informed here that there is some probability that your Legislature will instruct your delegates to vote for Philadelphia as the place of the meeting of the first Con-

* These papers constituted the Federalist.

gress under the new government. I presume this information can hardly be well founded, as upon my calculations there is not a State in the Union so much interested in having the temporary residence at New York as New Jersey.

As between Philadelphia and New York, I am mistaken if a greater proportion of your State will not be benefited by having the seat of government at the latter than the former place.

If at the latter, too, its exposed and eccentric position will necessitate the early establishment of a permanent seat, and in passing south it is highly probable the government would light upon the Delaware in New Jersey. The Northern States do not wish to increase Pennsylvania by an accession of all the wealth and population of the federal city. Pennsylvania herself, when not seduced by *immediate possession*, will be glad to concur in a situation on the Jersey side of the Delaware. Here are at once a majority of the States; but place the government once down in Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania will, of course, hold fast; the State of Delaware will do the same.

All the States south, looking forward to the time when the balance of population will enable them to carry the government further south (say to the Potomac), and being accommodated in the meantime as well as they wish, will concur in no change. The government, from the delay, will take root in Philadelphia, and Jersey will lose all prospect of the federal city within her limits.

These appear to me calculations so obvious that I cannot persuade myself New Jersey will so much *oversee* her interest as to fall, in the present instance, into the snares of Pennsylvania.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, September, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

Your Excellency's friendly and obliging letter of the 28th ultimo came safely to hand. I thank you for your assurance of seconding my application to General Morgan. The

truth of that affair is that he purchased the watch for a trifle of a British soldier, who plundered Major Cochran at the moment of his fall at Yorktown.

I should be deeply pained, my dear sir, if your scruples in regard to a certain station should be matured into a resolution to decline it, though I am neither surprised at their existence, nor can I but agree in opinion that the caution you observe in deferring an ultimate determination is prudent. I have, however, reflected maturely on the subject, and have come to a conclusion (in which I feel no hesitation), that every public and personal consideration will demand from you an acquiescence in what will *certainly* be the unanimous wish of your country. The absolute retreat which you meditated at the close of the late war was natural and proper. Had the government produced by the Revolution gone on in a *tolerable* train, it would have been most advisable to have persisted in that retreat. But I am clearly of opinion that the crisis which brought you again into public view left you no alternative but to comply, and I am equally clear in the opinion that you are by that act *pledged* to take a part in the execution of the government. I am not less convinced that the impression of this necessity of your filling the station in question is so universal, that you run no risk of any uncandid imputation by submitting to it. But even if this were not the case, a regard to your own reputation, as well as to the public good, calls upon you in the strongest manner to run that risk.

It cannot be considered as a compliment to say that on your acceptance of the office of President the success of the new government in its commencement may materially depend. Your agency and influence will be not less important in preserving it from the future attacks of its enemies than they have been in recommending it in the first instance to the adoption of the people. Independent of all considerations drawn from this source, the point of light in which you stand at home and abroad will make an infinite differ-

ence in the respectability with which the government will begin its operations in the alternative of your being or not being at the head of it. I forbear to urge considerations which might have a more personal application. What I have said will suffice for the inferences I mean to draw.

First. In a matter so essential to the well-being of society as the prosperity of a newly-instituted government, a citizen of so much consequence as yourself to its success has no option but to lend his services if called for. Permit me to say it would be inglorious in such a situation not to hazard the glory, however great, which he might have previously acquired.

Secondly. Your signature to the proposed system pledges your judgment for its being such a one as, upon the whole, was worthy of the public approbation. If it should miscarry (as men commonly decide from success, or the want of it), the blame will, in all probability, be laid on the system itself, and the framers of it will have to encounter the disrepute of having brought about a revolution in government, without substituting any thing that was worthy of the effort. They pulled down one Utopia, it will be said, to build up another. This view of the subject, if I mistake not, my dear sir, will suggest to your mind greater hazard to that fame, which must be and ought to be dear to you, in refusing your future aid to the system than in affording it. I will only add that, in my estimate of the matter, that aid is indispensable.

I have taken the liberty to express these sentiments, and to lay before you my view of the subject. I doubt not the considerations mentioned have fully occurred to you, and I trust they will finally produce in your mind the same result which exists in mine. I flatter myself the frankness with which I have delivered myself will not be displeasing to you. It has been prompted by motives which you would not disapprove. The letter enclosed in yours was immediately forwarded.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.*

NEW YORK, October 9, 1788.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your obliging congratulations on the event towards effecting which your aid as a joint laborer was so essential. I hope experience may show that, while it promotes the interest of this place, it will not be incompatible with public good. We are making efforts to prepare handsome accommodations for the session of the new Congress.

On the subject of Vice-President, my ideas have concurred with yours, and I believe Mr. Adams will have the votes of this State. He will certainly, I think, be preferred to the other gentleman. Yet *certainly* is perhaps too strong a word. I can conceive that the other, who is supposed to be a more pliable man, may command Anti-federal influence.

The only hesitation in my mind with regard to Mr. Adams has arisen within a day or two from a suggestion by a particular gentleman that he is unfriendly in his sentiments to General Washington. Richard H. Lee, who will probably, as rumor now runs, come from Virginia, is also in this style. The Lees and Adamses have been in the habit of uniting, and hence may spring up a cabal very embarrassing to the Executive, and of course to the administration of the government. Consider this—sound the reality of it, and let me hear from you.

What think you of Lincoln or Knox? This is a flying thought.

TO NATHANIEL CHIPMAN.

1788.

SIR:

Your favor of the 6th of September has been duly handed to me, and I receive great pleasure from the hopes you appear to entertain of a favorable turn of affairs in Vermont in regard to the new government. It is certainly an object

* Theodore Sedgwick, of Massachusetts, afterwards member of Congress, Speaker of the House, and a judge of the Supreme Court of his native State. He was a stanch Federalist and an ardent friend of Hamilton.

of mutual importance to yourselves, and to the Union, and well deserves the best endeavors of every discerning and good man.

I observe with satisfaction your opinion that Vermont will not make a point of introducing amendments. I mean as a condition of her accession. That ground would be the most hazardous which she could venture upon, as it is very probable that such amendments as might be popular with you would be deemed inadmissible by the friends of the system, who will doubtless be the most influential persons in the national councils; and who would rather submit to the inconvenience of your being out of the Union, till circumstances should alter, than consent to any thing that might impair the energy of the government. The article of taxation is, above all, the most delicate thing to meddle with; for as *plenary* power in that respect must ever be considered as the vital principle of government, no abridgment or constitutional suspension of that power can ever, upon mature consideration, be countenanced by the intelligent friends of an effective national government. You must, as I remarked in my former letter, rely upon the natural course of things, which I am satisfied will exempt you in ordinary times from direct taxation, on account of the difficulty of exercising it in so extensive a country, so peculiarly situated, with advantage to the revenue or satisfaction to the people. Though this difficulty will be gradually diminished from various causes, a considerable time must first elapse; and, in the interim, you will have nothing to apprehend on this score.

As far as indirect taxation is concerned, it will be impossible to exempt you from sharing in the burthen, nor can it be desired by your citizens. I repeat these ideas to impress you the more strongly with my sense of the danger of touching this chord, and of the impolicy of perplexing the main object with any such collateral experiments, while I am glad to perceive that you do not think your people will be tenacious on the point.

It will be useless for you to have any view in your act to the present Congress. They can of course do nothing in the matter. All you will have to do will be to pass an act of accession to the new Constitution, on the conditions upon which you mean to rely. It will then be for the new government, when met, to declare whether you can be received on your own terms or not.

I am sorry to find that the affair of boundary is likely to create some embarrassment. Men's minds, everywhere out of your State, are made up upon and reconciled to that which has been delineated by Congress. Any departure from it must beget new discussions, in which all the passions will have their usual scope, and may occasion greater impediments than the real importance of the thing would justify. If, however, the further claims you state cannot be gotten over with you, I would still wish to see the experiment made, though with this clog, because I have it very much at heart that you should become a member of the Confederacy. It is, however, not to be inferred that the same disposition will actuate everybody. In this State, the pride of certain individuals has too long triumphed over the public interest; and in several of the Southern States a jealousy of Northern influence will prevent any great zeal for increasing in the national councils the number of Northern votes.

I mention these circumstances (though I dare say they will have occurred to you), to show you the necessity of moderation and caution on your part, and the error of any sanguine calculation upon a disposition to receive you at any rate. A supposition of this nature might lead to fatal mistakes.

In the event of an extension of your boundary beyond the Congressional line, would it be impracticable for you to have commissioners appointed to adjust any differences which might arise? I presume the principal object with you in the extension of your boundary would be to cover some private interests. This might be matter of negotiation.

There is one thing which I think it proper to mention to you, about which I have some doubt—that is, whether a

legislative accession would be deemed valid. It is the policy of the system to lay its foundations in the *immediate* consent of the people. You will best judge how far it is safe or practicable to have recourse to a convention. Whatever you do, no time ought to be lost. The present moment is undoubtedly critically favorable. Let it by all means be improved.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, November 9, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your last letter but one met me at Albany attending court, from whence I am but just returned. Yours of the 2d inst. is this moment handed me.

I am very sorry for the schism you hint at among the Federalists, but I have so much confidence in the good management of the fast friends of the Constitution, that I hope no ill consequences will ensue from that disagreement. It will, however, be worthy of great care to avoid suffering a difference of opinion on collateral points, to produce any serious division between those who have hitherto drawn together on the great national question.

Permit me to add that I do not think you should allow any line to be run between those who wish to trust alterations to future experience, and those who are desirous of them at the present juncture. The rage for amendments is in my *opinion* rather to be parried by address than encountered with open force. And I shall therefore be loth to learn that your parties have been arranged professedly upon the distinction I have mentioned. The *mode* in which amendments may best be made, and twenty other matters, may serve as pretexts for avoiding the evil and securing the good.

On the question between Mr. H.* and Mr. A.,† Mr. King

* John Hancock.

† John Adams. The question was which of these two should be supported for the Vice-Presidency.

will probably have informed you that I have, upon the whole, concluded that the latter ought to be supported. My measures will be taken accordingly. I had but one scruple, but after mature consideration, I have relinquished it. Mr. A., to a sound understanding, has always appeared to me to add an ardent love for the public good, and, as his further knowledge of the world seems to have corrected those jealousies which he is represented to have once been influenced by, I trust nothing of the kind suggested in my former letter will disturb the harmony of the administration. Let me continue to hear from you, and believe me to be, with very great esteem and regard, etc.

TO WASHINGTON.

November 18, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

Your two last letters have duly come to hand, and the Count de Moustier has delivered me the watch you committed to his charge. Your obliging attention to this matter claims my particular acknowledgments. I will make no apology for asking you to take the additional trouble of forwarding the enclosed to the General. I take the liberty of passing it through you, that you may, by perusing the contents, know the situation of the business.

The demand of fifty guineas is to me quite unexpected. I am sorry to add that there is too good evidence that it cost a mere trifle to the General. This, however, I mention in confidence. Nor shall I give you any further trouble on the subject. Whatever may be proper will be done.

Mrs. Hamilton requests her affectionate remembrances to Mrs. Washington, and joins me in the best wishes for you both.

P. S.—Your last letter, on a certain subject, I have received. I feel a conviction that you will finally see your acceptance to be indispensable. It is no compliment to say that no other man can sufficiently unite the public opinion or can give the requisite weight to the office in

the commencement of the government. These considerations appear to me of themselves decisive. I am not sure that your refusal would not throw every thing into confusion. I am sure that it would have the worst effect imaginable. Indeed, as I hinted in a former letter, I think circumstances leave no option.

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

NEW YORK, November 23, 1788.

I thank you, my dear sir, for yours of the 20th. The only part of it which surprises me is what you mention respecting Clinton. I cannot, however, believe that the plan will succeed. Nor, indeed, do I think that Clinton would be disposed to exchange his present appointment for that office, or risk his popularity by holding both. At the same time the attempt merits attention, and ought not to be neglected as chimerical or impracticable.

In Massachusetts the Electors will, I understand, be appointed by the Legislature, and will be all Federal, and 't is probable will be, for the most part, in favor of Adams. It is said the same thing will happen in New Hampshire, and, I have reason to believe, it will be the case in Connecticut. In this State it is difficult to form any certain calculation. A large majority of the *Assembly* was doubtless of an Anti-federal complexion, but the schism in the party, which has been occasioned by the falling off of some of its leaders in the Convention, leaves me not without hope that, if matters are well managed, we may procure a majority for some pretty equal compromise. In the Senate we have the superiority by one. In New Jersey there seems to be no question but that the complexion of the Electors will be Federal, and I suppose, if thought expedient, they may be united in favor of Adams. Pennsylvania you can best judge of. From Delaware, Maryland, and South Carolina, I presume, we may count with tolerable assurance on Federal men; and I should imagine, if pains are taken, the dan-

ger of an Anti-federal Vice-President might itself be rendered the instrument of Union. At any rate, their weight will not be thrown into the scale of Clinton, and I do not see from what quarter numbers can be marshalled in his favor equal to those who will advocate Adams, supposing even a division in the Federal votes.

On the whole I have concluded to support Adams, though I am not without apprehensions on the score we have conversed about. My principal reasons are these: First, he is a declared partisan of deferring to future experience the expediency of amendments in the system, and (although I do not altogether *adopt* this sentiment) it is much nearer my own than certain other doctrines. Secondly, he is certainly a character of importance in the Eastern States; if he is not Vice-President, one of two worse things will be likely to happen. Either he must be nominated to some important office, for which he is less proper, or will become a malcontent, and give additional weight to the opposition to the government. As to Knox, I cannot persuade myself that he will incline to the appointment. He must *sacrifice* emolument by it, which must be of *necessity* a primary object with him.

If it should be thought expedient to endeavor to unite on a particular character, there is a danger of a different kind to which we must not be inattentive—the possibility of rendering it doubtful who is appointed President. You know the Constitution has not provided the means of distinguishing in certain cases, and it would be disagreeable to have a man treading close upon the heels of the person we wish as President. May not the malignity of the opposition be, in some instances, exhibited even against him? Of all this we shall best judge when we know who are our Electors; and we must, in our different circles, take our measures accordingly.

I could console myself for what you mention respecting yourself, from a desire to see you in one of the executive departments, did I not perceive the representation will be

defective in characters of a certain description. Wilson is evidently out of the question. King tells me he does not believe he will be elected into either House. Mr. Gouverneur Morris set out to-day for France, by way of Philadelphia. If you are not in one of the branches, the government may sincerely feel the want of men who unite to zeal all the requisite qualifications for parrying the machinations of its enemies. Might I advise, it would be, that you bent your course to Virginia.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, January 29, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your two letters of the 4th and 7th instant which arrived here during my absence at Albany, from which place I have but recently returned. I believe you may be perfectly tranquil on the subject of Mr. Adams' election. It seems to be certain that all the Middle States will vote for him to Delaware inclusively, and probably Maryland. In the South there are no candidates thought of but Rutledge and Clinton. The latter will have the votes of Virginia, and it is *possible* some in South Carolina. Maryland will certainly not vote for Clinton, and New York, from our Legislature having by their contentions let slip the day, will not vote at all. For the last circumstance I am not sorry, as the most we could hope would be to balance accounts and do no harm. The Anti-federalists incline to an appointment notwithstanding, but I discourage it with the Federalists. Under these circumstances I see not how any person can come near Mr. Adams—that is, taking it for granted that he will unite the votes in New Hampshire aud Massachusetts. I expect that the federal votes in Virginia, if any, will be in favor of Adams.

You will probably have heard that our Legislature has passed a bill for electing representatives. The Houses continue to disagree about senators, and I fear a compromise will be impracticable. I do not, however, entirely lose

hope. In this situation you will see we have much to apprehend respecting the seat of government. The Pennsylvanians are endeavoring to bring their forces early in the field—I hope our friends in the North will not be behindhand. On many accounts, indeed, it appears to be important that there be an appearance of zeal and punctuality in coming forward to set the government in motion.

I shall learn with definite pleasure that you are a representative. As to me, this will not be the case—I believe, from my own disinclination of the thing. We shall, however, I flatter myself, have a couple of Federalists.

TO LAFAYETTE.

NEW YORK, October 6, 1789.

MY DEAR MARQUIS:

I have seen, with a mixture of pleasure and apprehension, the progress of the events which have lately taken place in your country. As a friend to mankind and to liberty, I rejoice in the efforts which you are making to establish it, while I fear much for the final success of the attempts, for the fate of those I esteem who are engaged in it, and for the danger, in case of success, of innovations greater than will consist with the real felicity of your nation. If your affairs still go well when this reaches you, you will ask why this foreboding of ill, when all the appearances have been so much in your favor. I will tell you. I dread disagreements among those who are now united (which will be likely to be improved by the adverse party) about the nature of your constitution; I dread the vehement character of your people, whom I fear you may find it more easy to bring on, than to keep within proper bounds after you have put them in motion; I dread the interested refractoriness of your nobles, who cannot be gratified, and who may be unwilling to submit to the requisite sacrifices. And I dread the reveries of your philosophic politicians, who appear in the moment to have great influence, and who, being mere speculatists, may aim at more refinement

than suits either with human nature or the composition of your nation.

These, my dear Marquis, are my apprehensions. My wishes for your personal success and that of the cause of liberty are incessant. Be virtuous amidst the seductions of ambition, and you can hardly in any event be unhappy. You are combined with a great and good man; you will anticipate the name of Neckar. I trust you and he will never cease to harmonize.

You will, I presume, have heard before this gets to hand, that I have been appointed to the head of the finances of this country. This event, I am sure, will give you pleasure. In undertaking the task I hazard much, but I thought it an occasion that called upon me to hazard. I have no doubt that the reasonable expectation of the public may be satisfied, if I am properly supported by the Legislature, and in this respect I stand at present on the most encouraging footing.

The debt due to France will be among the first objects of my attention. Hitherto it has been from necessity neglected. The session of Congress is now over. It has been exhausted in the organization of the government and in a few laws of immediate urgency respecting navigation and commercial imposts. The subject of the debt, foreign and domestic, has been referred to the next session, which will commence the first Monday in January, with an instruction to me to prepare and report a plan comprehending an adequate provision for the support of the public credit. There were many good reasons for a temporary adjournment.

From this sketch you will perceive that I am not in a situation to address any thing officially to your administration; but I venture to say to you, as my friend, that if the instalments of the principal of the debt could be suspended for a few years, it would be a valuable accommodation to the United States. In this suggestion, I contemplate a speedy payment of the *arrears* of *interest* now due, and

effectual provision for the punctual payment of future interest as it arises. Could an arrangement of this sort meet the approbation of your government, it would be best on every account that the offer should come unsolicited as a fresh mark of good-will.

I wrote you last by Mr. De Warville. I presume you received my letter. As it touched upon some delicate topics I should be glad to know its fate.

P. S.—The latest accounts from France have abated some of my apprehensions. The abdications of privileges patronized by your nobility in the States-General are truly noble, and bespeak a patriotic and magnanimous policy which promises good both to them and their country.

TO RUFUS KING.

ALBANY, July 15, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received your letter by the last post but one. I immediately set about circulating an idea that it would be injurious to the city to have Duane elected, as the probability was some very unfit character would be his successor. My object was to have this sentiment communicated to our members. But a stop was put to my measures by a letter received from Burr, announcing that at a general meeting of the Federalists of both Houses, Schuyler and Duane had been determined upon in a manner that precluded future attempts.

I find, however, by a letter from General Schuyler, received this day, that L'Hommedieu and Morris may spoil all. Troup tells me that L'Hommedieu is opposed to you. He made our friend Benson believe that he would even relinquish himself for you. What does all this mean?

Certain matters here, about which we have so often talked, remain *in statu quo.**

* For this letter, now first printed, I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. Charles King, the possessor of the King papers. It is a very interesting letter, because it relates to the struggle over the election of United States Senators from New York, which kept New York without representation in the Senate during the first session of Congress, and which by its results had such an

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, September 13, 1789.

SIR:

It is with pleasure I am able to inform you that you have been appointed Auditor in the Department of the Treasury. The salary of this office is fifteen hundred dollars. Your friends having expressed a doubt of your acceptance, I cannot forbear saying that I shall be happy to find the doubt has been ill-founded, as from the character I have received of you I am persuaded you will be an acquisition to the department. I need scarcely add that your presence here as soon as possible is essential to the progress of business.*

TO JAMES MADISON, JR.

October 12, 1789.

I thank you, my dear sir, for the line you were so obliging as to leave for me, and the loan of the book accompanying it, in which I have not made sufficient progress to judge

important influence on the party politics of the time. Hamilton desired Schuyler and Rufus King to be Senators. The Livingstons, who led and represented an important part of the Federalists, cheerfully conceded Schuyler, but wished the other to be a member of their faction. There was no question as to King's ability and distinction as a statesman, but he had just come to New York from Massachusetts, and was a comparative stranger. The wish of the Livingstons was perfectly right and reasonable, and every consideration of party wisdom urged the importance of gratifying them. Whether they would have been satisfied with Duane is not clear. Both L'Hommedieu and Gouverneur Morris were at one time in the field. Ezra L'Hommedieu was an able politician, and the originator of the measure for the State University. Hamilton however declined to yield. A protracted struggle followed, and Schuyler and King were chosen. At the expiration of Schuyler's term of two years, Burr was elected in his stead, the Livingstons were hopelessly and finally alienated, the State became doubtful, and was finally lost to the Federalists. It was one of the instances in which Hamilton's bold, imperious temper, which made him so strong as a statesman and administrator, led him into a fatal error as a politician. The Robert Troup referred to was an adroit politician and great friend of Hamilton. I have one of his letters written at this time, which exhibits the details of the contest of which I have given an outline.

* This letter is reprinted from Gibbs' "Administrations of Washington and Adams," i., 2. Oliver Wolcott of Connecticut accepted the office of Auditor here offered him, and succeeded Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury.

of its merit. I don't know how it was, but I took it for granted that you had left town earlier than I did; else I should have found an opportunity, after your adjournment, to converse with you on the subjects committed to me by the House of Representatives. It is certainly important that a plan as complete and as unexceptionable as possible should be matured by the next meeting of Congress; and for this purpose it could not but be useful that there should be a comparison and concentration of ideas, of those whose duty leads them to a contemplation of the subject. As I lost the opportunity of a personal communication, may I ask of your friendship, to put to paper and send me your thoughts on such objects as may have occurred to you, for an addition to our revenue, and also as to any modifications of the public debt, which could be made consistent with good faith—the interest of the public and of the creditors.

In my opinion, in considering plans for the increase of our revenue, the difficulty lies not so much in the want of objects as in prejudice, which may be feared with regard to almost every object. The question is very much, What further taxes will be least unpopular?*

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, October 20, 1789.

SIR:

Agreeably to your desire I sit down to commit a few lines to the post.

Nothing worth particular mention has occurred since your departure, except a report brought by Mr. Keane from South Carolina, that Mr. McGillivray, the Indian chief, has, after a short conference, left our commissioners, declaring that what they suggested was only a repetition of the old story, and inadmissible, or something to that effect. It is added that the Lower Creeks appeared, notwithstanding, willing to go into a treaty, but the Upper ones declined it. General Knox, who has particularly conversed with Mr. Keane, will doubtless give you a more accurate state-

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," iv., 60.

ment of what he brings. It seems, however, that he has his intelligence at second- or third-hand.

P. S.—I have just seen a letter from a private gentleman of considerable intelligence now in North Carolina, who gives an ill picture of the prospect there, respecting the adoption of the Constitution.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Nov. 19, 1789.

SIR:

In the estimate laid before Congress at their last sessions, I included as an anticipation of the late Superintendent of Finance the amount of a draft issued by him in your favor on the late Receiver of Taxes for the State of New York, for fifty thousand dollars, no part of which appears to have been paid.

The circumstances attending this anticipation not being sufficiently known by the Legislature, prevented (as I presume) a provision being made for it. It will be therefore necessary for you to inform me particularly of the nature and circumstances attending this anticipation, and particularly whether there are any points respecting the claims under it which give the parties a right to expect payment for them in specie, whilst so many debts in your department appear to have been discharged by certificates.

I wish likewise to know whether any or what part of these claims may have been settled by the different State commissioners, and what mode can be adopted for ascertaining them should the Legislature think proper to make a provision for it.*

TO COL. R. H. HARRISON.†

NEW YORK, Nov. 27, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

After having labored with you in the common cause of America during the late war, and having learned your value, judge of the pleasure I feel in the prospect of a reunion of

*Now first printed from the Pickering papers in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

† Col. Robert Hanson Harrison, of Maryland, one of Washington's aides-de-camp, familiarly known as the "Old Secretary."

efforts in this same cause; for I consider the business of America's happiness as yet to be done.

In proportion to that sentiment has been my disappointment at learning that you had declined a seat on the bench of the United States. Cannot your determination, my dear friend, be reconsidered?

One of your objections, I think, will be removed; I mean that which relates to the nature of the establishment. Many concur in opinion that its present form is inconvenient, if not impracticable. Should an alteration take place, your other objection will also be removed; for you can then be nearly as much at home as you are now.

If it is possible, my dear Harrison, give yourself to us. We want men like you. They are rare at all times. Adieu.

TO HENRY LEE.*

NEW YORK, December 1, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I have received your letter of the 16th inst. I am sure you are sincere when you say that you would not subject me to an impropriety; nor do I know that there would be any in my answering your queries. But you remember the saying with regard to Cæsar's wife. I think the spirit of it applicable to every man concerned in the administration of the finance of a country. With respect to the conduct of such men, *suspicion* is ever eagle-eyed. And the most innocent things are apt to be misinterpreted.

Be assured of the affection and friendship of, etc.

TO WILLIAM DUER.

1790.

While I truly regret, my dear friend, that the necessity of your situation compels you to relinquish a station† in which public and personal considerations combine to induce me to

* Henry Lee, of Virginia, one of the most dashing soldiers of the Revolution, and best known by his soubriquet of "Light-Horse Harry."

† William Duer was Secretary of the old Treasury Board, and served as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury with Hamilton until 1790. This letter is

wish your continuance, I cannot but be sensible of the force of the motives by which you are determined. And I interest myself in your happiness too sincerely not to acquiesce in whatever may redound to your advantage. I confess, too, that *upon reflection* I cannot help thinking you have decided rightly.

I count with confidence on your future friendship, as you may on mine.

An engagement at the President's will not let me meet you at dinner, but I shall be happy to see you in the evening. Adieu. God bless you, and give you the success for which you will always have my warmest wishes.

TO ÆDANUS BURKE.*

NEW YORK, April 1, 1790.

SIR:

I have been informed that in the House of Representatives yesterday, you made use of some very harsh expressions in relation to me.

As I cannot but ascribe so unprovoked an attack to misapprehension or misrepresentation, I have concluded to send you an extract from the eulogium pronounced by me on Gen. Greene, of the part to which alone your animadversions could relate.

It is in these words:

"From the heights of Monmouth I might lead you to the *plains of Springfield*, there to behold the veteran Knyphausen, at the head of a veteran army, baffled and almost beaten by a general without an army, aided—or rather embarrassed—by small fugitive bodies of volunteer militia, the *mimicry of soldiership*."

dated 1789 in the edition of 1850, but as it refers to Duer's retirement from office, could not have been written until the beginning of the following year.

* Member of Congress from South Carolina from 1789–1791. He was a distinguished lawyer, a judge, and, at the end of his life, Chancellor of his State. There is no speech by Mr. Burke reported in the Annals of Congress for March 31, 1790.

From this you will perceive that the epithets to which you have taken exception are neither applicable to the militia of South Carolina in particular, nor to *militia* in general, but merely to "*small fugitive* bodies of *volunteer* militia."

Having thus, sir, stated the matter in its true light, it remains for you to judge what conduct, in consequence of the explanation, will be proper on your part.*

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, May 13, 1790.

DEAR SIR:

The offer of your service as successor to Mr. Duer reached me in due time.

I can with truth assure you that you were one of a very small number who held a competition in my judgment, and that had personal considerations alone influenced me, I could with difficulty have preferred another. Reasons of a peculiar nature, however, have determined my choice towards Mr. Tench Coxe, who to great industry and very good talents adds an extensive theoretical and practical knowledge of trade.

Allow me to say that, knowing as I now do your views to public life, I shall, from conviction of your worth, take pleasure in promoting them—and I hope an opportunity will not be long wanting.†

TO WINN.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 18, 1790.

SIR:

Mr. Justin Foote has delivered at this office a commission from the President of the United States, vesting you with the office of Surveyor of the Port of Winton in North Carolina. This gentleman informed me that he was not charged with any letter of resignation from you, but stated the substance of your verbal communication to him at the time.

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

† Now first printed from the Pickering papers in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Soon after this Col. Pickering was made Postmaster-General.

Passing over the obligation of every good citizen to deport himself with due respect to the Chief Magistrate, and especially of those to whom he and the Senate may have previously given indications of confidence, which I am persuaded you would not intentionaliy deviate from, I beg leave to observe that questions may be raised whether the return of a commission is all that is requisite from gentlemen who decline an appointment to a public trust. Under these circumstances, I find myself constrained to request that you will make known to the President, in a regular way, your intentions as to your late appointment.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, September 21, 1790.

SIR:

Doctor Craigie has communicated to me a letter from Mr. Daniel Parker to him, dated London, the 12th of July, which mentions that he had just seen Mr. De Miranda, who had recently conversed with the Marquis del Campo, from whom he had learnt that the Court of Spain had acceded to our right of navigating the Mississippi.

Col. Smith has also read to me a passage out of another letter of the 6th of July, which mentions that orders had been sent to the Viceroy of Mexico and the Governor of New Orleans not to interrupt the passage of vessels of the United States through that river.

It is probable that other communications will have ascertained to you whether there be any and what foundation for this intelligence; but I have thought it advisable, notwithstanding, to impart it to you.

The reports from Europe favor more and more the idea of peace. They are, however, not conclusive, and not entirely correspondent.

Captain Watson, of the ship New York, who left London the 28th of July, and Torbay the 16th or 17th of August, informs that the evening preceding her departure from Torbay he was informed by different officers of the fleet that

peace between Britain and Spain had taken place, and had been notified by Mr. Pitt in a letter to the Lord Mayor of London, of which an account had arrived *that evening*. He had, however, seen no papers concerning the account, and the press of seamen had continued down to the same evening.

On the other hand, Captain Hunter, of the ship George, who left St. Andero the 8th of August, affirms that vigorous preparations for war were still going on at that port.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, September 29, 1790.

SIR:

I have been duly honored with your two letters of the 18th and 20th of September.

My opinion on a certain subject has been forwarded, and I hope will ere this have come to hand.

Inclosed you will be pleased to receive a list of such characters as, from the documents furnished by Mr. Lear, from my inquiries, and from the intimations contained in your letter of the 20th, appear to stand, upon the whole, fairest for the command of the revenue boats, except for the stations of North Carolina and Georgia, concerning which there is no satisfactory information.

Captain Montgomery is said to have, on some accounts, greater pretensions to respectability than Captain Roach (though both are represented to be men of merit), and *something like* claim to preference from situation.

Mr. Gross is submitted on the recommendation of Captain Barney, who mentions favorably both him and a Mr. Daniel Porter, naming Gross first, but without expressing a preference of either.

The Vice-President put into my hand a day or two ago the inclosed letters concerning Captain Lyde, but as Williams, who is recommended by Governor Hancock, is also warmly recommended by General Lincoln, the evidence in his favor may be deemed to preponderate.

The manifest expediency of the previous nomination or

appointment of the persons who are to command the boats to oversee the building and equipping of them will suspend the further execution of the business till your pleasure as to persons shall be signified.

The subaltern officers can be appointed at greater leisure, for which purpose I am collecting information, as I am also doing in respect to commanders for the two boats destined for North Carolina and Georgia; but I presume the others need not be delayed on this account.

P. S.—The British packet is just arrived. The rumor is, that the declarations in the inclosed paper were regarded as the prelude of peace; but that the matter was not considered as finished, and, accordingly, the press of seamen had continued with as much vivacity as before. In the letter from the Minister to the Lord Mayor, these declarations seemed to be regarded in the above-mentioned light. The letter says, the negotiators were about to proceed to the discussion of the other matters in dispute with a view to a definitive arrangement.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, October 17, 1790.

SIR:

I had the honor of receiving your letter of the 10th inst. by the last post. It is certainly very possible, that motives different from the one avowed may have produced a certain communication; and in matters of such a nature it is not only allowable, but the dictate of prudence, to receive suggestions with peculiar caution.

A British packet arrived yesterday. The accounts she brings are all of a warlike aspect. I have extracted from an English paper the inclosed decree of the National Assembly of France; which, though of a qualified tenor, looks pretty directly towards the eventual supporting of Spain. The English papers hold it up as a decisive indication of a disposition to do so. And it is said, in some of the letters which have been received, that positive orders have been

sent to Lord Howe to fight if he can find an opportunity. The papers announce a second fleet of fifteen sail of the line ready to rendezvous at Portsmouth, to be under the command of Admiral Hood. Their destination unknown.

It is also mentioned that the Dutch fleet had returned to the Texel, the Duke of Leeds having previously made a journey for an interview with the Dutch admiral. This very mysterious circumstance is wholly unexplained.

A certain gentleman who called on me to-day, informed me that a packet had sailed the 16th of August for Quebec, in which went passenger General Clarke. He added that the rumor in England was, that Sir Guy Carleton was to return in her. He made no other communication.

The inclosed letter came to hand to-day. I have had no opportunity of making any inquiry concerning the person recommended in it. If I can obtain any additional lights, they shall be made known without delay.

The object suggested in your letter as preparatory to the meeting of the Legislature shall engage my particular attention.

The papers of the Departments of State and the Treasury, and of the commissioners for settling accounts, are on their way to Philadelphia. On the 20th, I propose with my family to set out for the same place.

TO JOHN JAY.

PHILADELPHIA, November 13, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR:

I enclose you copies of two resolutions which have passed the House of Representatives of Virginia. Others had been proposed and disagreed to. But the war was still going on. A spirited remonstrance to Congress is talked of. This is the first symptom of a spirit which must either be killed, or it will kill the Constitution of the United States. I send the resolutions to you, that it may be considered what ought to be done. Ought not the collective weight of the different parts of the government to be employed in

exploding the principles they contain? This question arises out of sudden and undigested thought.*

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, December 2, 1790.

SIR:

The day before yesterday I received a letter from Mr. Woodbury Langdon, declining the appointment offered him. There was a letter with it for you which I immediately forwarded.

Since that time I have conversed with Mr. Langdon, and have heard from Mr. Gilman; the former is warm in his recommendation of Mr. Keith Spence; he states that his insolvency was owing to the loss of a valuable ship and cargo, and was attended with the most honorable circumstances; that an immediate adjustment with the creditors took place to their entire satisfaction; that the deficiency was only £1,000, which he considers as remitted; that Mr. Spence was in partnership with Mr. Sherburne; that they have both been since in good business, and are now more than able to pay whatever they may owe; that the failure happened some years ago; that Mr. Spence, though a native of Scotland, came early to this country—is a man of education and abilities, well known and respected—a firm friend to the Revolution and to the National Government—married to a lady of New Hampshire, with whom he has several children. He showed me a letter from Mr. Spence, which gives a favorable impression of his modesty and capacity.

Mr. Gilman talks of Mr. Spence as a man not generally known, and who, being by birth a foreigner, is not as acceptable as a native to the people of that country; that his attachment to the American cause was rather ambiguous; that he married the daughter of a person who is now in office in the Island of Bermuda, and lately made a visit there; that his insolvency would throw a shade on his appointment, in the public opinion.

* Reprinted from "Life of Jay," ii., 202.

He, on the other hand, warmly recommended a Mr. William Gardiner, the present Treasurer of New Hampshire; speaks decidedly of his good character, and abilities as a man of business, and of his general good standing in the State.

Mr. Langdon admits Mr. Gardiner to be a good and a qualified man—says he was formerly his first clerk, but affirms that Mr. Spence has greatly the superiority in point of qualification—hints at an arrangement between Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Gilman, the late Loan Officer, by which Mr. Gilman expects to succeed to the office of Treasurer, if the other obtains that of Commissioner of Loans.

Thus stands my information as far as it goes; I conjecture, on the whole, that Mr. Spence is an unexceptionable man, in every respect but that of his late insolvency, and that he is probably *better* qualified than Mr. Gardiner, or, in other words, a man of more ability. That, nevertheless, Mr. Gardiner is qualified for the office, and in other respects an eligible person. Perhaps the appointment of him will be, upon the whole, a safer one—freer from hazard of imputation of any kind.

You are, I presume, not unapprised of a Langdon and Gilman party in New Hampshire. Though it is desirable this business should be finished, yet if it be supposed likely that the arrival of the Eastern members will afford any new light, a few days' delay cannot be very important.

TO WILLIAM SETON.*

PHILADELPHIA, January 18, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have learnt with infinite pain the circumstance of a new bank having started up in your city. Its effects cannot but be in every way pernicious. These extravagant sallies of speculation do injury to the government and to the whole system of public credit, by disgusting all sober citizens and

* William Seton, a Scotchman by birth, and a well-known business man of New York. He was Cashier of the Bank of New York, of which Hamilton was one of the founders. See "History of the Bank of New York," by Henry W. Domett.

giving a wild air to every thing. 'T is impossible but that three great banks in one city must raise such a mass of artificial credit as must endanger every one of them, and do harm in every view.

I sincerely hope that the Bank of New York will listen to no coalition with this newly engendered monster; a better alliance, I am strongly persuaded, will be brought about for it, and the joint force of two solid institutions will, without effort or violence, remove the excrescence which has just appeared, and which I consider as a dangerous tumor in your political and commercial economy.

I express myself in these *strong terms* to you confidentially, not that I have any objection to my opinion being known as to the nature and tendency of the thing.

TO ———.

PHILADELPHIA, April 10, 1791.

SIR:

Your letter of the 15th of March duly came to hand, though not till after the arrangement for the execution of the act mentioned in your letter had been made.

I wish you not to consider it as a mere compliment, when I say that the light in which your character stands could not fail to have brought you into view in that arrangement, and could you be minutely acquainted with every circumstance that in the President's mind inclined the balance a different way, you would find no reason to be dissatisfied with the estimation in which you have been held. You are well aware that in a comparison of the pretensions of men of merit, collateral considerations may be often justly allowed to turn the scale.

Suffer me to add that in the course of those future opportunities which may be expected to occur, it would give me a pleasure, as far as may be in my power, to be instrumental in furnishing you with a proper occasion for the exercise of your talents and zeal in the service of the national government.

TO WASHINGTON.*

April 10, 1791.

* * * It is to be lamented that our system is such as still to leave the public peace of the Union at the mercy of each State government. This is not only the case as it regards direct interferences, but as it regards the inability of the national government, in many particulars, to take those direct measures for carrying into execution its views and engagements which exigencies require. For example: a party comes from a county of Virginia into Pennsylvania and wantonly murders some friendly Indians. The national government, instead of having power to apprehend murderers and bring them to justice, is obliged to make a representation to that of Pennsylvania; that of Pennsylvania again is to make a representation to that of Virginia. And whether the murderers shall be brought to justice at all, must depend upon the particular policy and energy and good disposition of two State governments and the efficacy of the provisions of their respective laws; and the security of other States, and the money of all, are at the discretion of one. These things require a remedy.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 17, 1791.

You will probably recollect that previous to your departure from this place, anticipating the event which has taken place with regard to the death of Mr. Everleigh, I took the liberty to mention to you that Mr. Wolcott, the present Auditor, would be in every respect worthy of your consideration as his successor in office.

Now that the event has happened, a concern as anxious as it was natural for the success of the department, united with a sentiment of justice towards Mr. Wolcott, leads me to a repetition of that idea. This gentleman's conduct in the station he now fills has been that of an excellent officer. It has not only been good, but distinguished. It has combined

* The other parts of this letter are not to be found.

all the requisites which can be desired: moderation with firmness, liberality with exactness, indefatigable industry with an accurate and sound discernment, a thorough knowledge of business, and a remarkable spirit of order and arrangement. Indeed, I ought to say that I owe very much of whatever success may have attended the merely executive operations of the department to Mr. Wolcott; and I do not fear to commit myself when I add that he possesses in an eminent degree all the qualifications desirable in a Comptroller of the Treasury—that it is scarcely possible to find a man in the United States more competent to the duties of that station than himself; few who could be equally so. It may be truly said of him that he is a man of rare merit, and I have good evidence that he has been viewed in this light by the members of Congress extensively from different quarters of the Union, and is so considered by all that part of the public who have had opportunities of witnessing his conduct.

The immediate relation, too, which his present situation bears to that of Comptroller is a strong argument in his favor. Though a regular gradation of office is not admissible in a strict sense in regard to offices of a civil nature, and is wholly inapplicable to those of the first rank (such as the heads of the great executive departments), yet a certain regard to the relation which one situation bears to another is consonant with the natural ideas of justice, and is recommended by powerful considerations of policy. The expectation of promotion in civil as in military life is a great stimulus to virtuous exertion, while examples of unrewarded exertion, supported by talent and qualification, are proportionable discouragements. Where they do not produce resignations they leave men dissatisfied, and a dissatisfied man seldom does his duty well.

In a government like ours, where pecuniary compensations are moderate, the principle of gradual advancement as a reward for good conduct is perhaps more necessary to be attended to than in others where offices are more lucrative. By due attention to it it will operate as a means to

secure respectable men for offices of inferior emolument and consequence.

In addition to the rest, Mr. Wolcott's experience in this particular line pleads powerfully in his favor. This experience may be dated back to his office of Comptroller of the State of Connecticut, and has been perfected by practice in his present place.

A question may perhaps, sir, arise in your mind, whether some inconvenience may not attend his removal from his present office. I am of opinion that no sensible inconvenience will be felt on this score, since it will be easy for him as Comptroller, who is the immediate superior of the Auditor, to form any man of business for the office he will leave, in a short period of time. More inconvenience would be felt by the introduction of a Comptroller not in the immediate train of the business.

Besides this, it may be observed that a degree of inconvenience on this score cannot be deemed an obstacle, but upon the principle which would bar the progress of merit from one station to another.

On this point of inconvenience a reflection occurs, which I think I ought not to suppress. Mr. Wolcott is a man of sensibility, not unconscious of his own value, and he doubtless must believe that he has pretensions from situation to the office. Should another be appointed, and he resign, the derangement of the department would truly be distressing to the public service.

In suggesting thus particularly the reasons which in my mind operate in favor of Mr. Wolcott, I am influenced by information that other characters will be brought to your view by weighty advocates, and as I think it more than possible that Mr. Wolcott may not be mentioned to you by any other person than myself, I feel it a duty arising out of my situation in the department, to bear my full and explicit testimony to his worth, confident that he will justify by every kind of *substantial* merit any mark of your approbation which he may receive.

I trust, sir, that in thus freely disclosing my sentiments to you, you will be persuaded that I only yield to the suggestions of an honest zeal for the public good, and of a firm conviction that the prosperity of the department under my particular care (one so interesting to the aggregate movements of the government) will be best promoted by transferring the present Auditor to the office of Comptroller of the Treasury.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 19, 1791.

SIR:

I have been duly honored with your letter of the 13th inst., from Mount Vernon; and, according to your desire, have informed Mr. Wolcott of your intention to appoint him Comptroller. This appointment gives me particular pleasure, as I am confident it will be a *great* and *real* improvement in the state of the Treasury Department. There can no material inconvenience attend the postponing a decision concerning the future Auditor till your arrival in this city.

I am very happy to learn that the circumstances of your journey have been in all respects so favorable. It has certainly been a particularly fortunate one, and I doubt not it will have been of real utility.

There is nothing which can be said to be new here worth communicating, except generally that all my accounts from *Europe*, both private and official, concur in proving that the impressions now entertained of our government and its affairs (I may say) *throughout* that quarter of the globe, are of a nature the most flattering and pleasing.

TO BENJAMIN GOODHUE.*

PHILADELPHIA, June 30, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR:

As Mr. Cone, who, I think, informed me he had a letter from you on the same subject, undertook to say all that could be said in relation to Mr. Gray's affair, I permitted the

* Benjamin Goodhue, of Salem, Member of Congress from Massachusetts.

hurry of business to keep me silent. Nothing further concerning the affair has since come to me, so that I am wholly ignorant what turn it may have taken. It must have given you pleasure to learn how much the Constitution of the United States, and the measures under it, in which you have had so considerable an agency, have contributed to raise this country in the estimation of Europe. According to the accounts received here, the change which has been wrought in the opinion of that part of the world respecting the United States is almost wonderful. The British Cabinet wish to be thought disposed to enter into amicable and liberal arrangements with us. They had appointed Mr. Elliott, who, on private considerations, had declined; and it is affirmed from pretty good, though not decisive authority, that they have substituted a Mr. Hammond, and that his arrival may shortly be expected. I would not warrant the issue, but if some liberal arrangement with Great Britain should ensue, it will have a prodigious effect upon the conduct of some other parts of Europe. It is, however, most wise for us to depend as little as possible upon European caprice, and to exert ourselves to the utmost to unfold and improve every domestic resource.

In all appearance, the subscriptions to the Bank of the United States will proceed with astonishing rapidity. It will not be surprising if a week completes them.

TO MRS. MARTHA WALKER.

PHILADELPHIA, July 2, 1791.

MADAM:

Mr. Ames* has conveyed to me your letter of the 9th of May.

Hitherto it has not been in my power to consider the merits of your application to Congress, but you may be assured of its being done so as to admit of a report at the commencement of the ensuing session.

* Fisher Ames, Member of Congress from Massachusetts, and well known for his ability and eloquence. I can find nothing in the State papers or in the Annals of Congress to explain Mrs. Walker or her claim.

While I dare not encourage any expectation, and while my conduct must be determined by my sense of official propriety and duty, I may with great truth say that I shall enter into the examination with every prepossession which can be inspired by favorable impression of personal merit, and by a sympathetic participation in the distresses of a lady as deserving as unfortunate.

TO RUFUS KING.

July 8, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received your letter on a certain subject, and was obliged by it. But there was nothing practicable by way of remedy.

The thing, as it has turned out, though good in the main, has certainly some ill sides. There have also been faults in the detail, which are not favorable to complete satisfaction. But what shall we do? 'T is the lot of every thing human to mingle a portion of evil with the good.

The President, as you will have seen, has returned. His journey has done good, as it regards his own impressions. He is persuaded that the dispositions of the Southern people are good, and that certain pictures which have been drawn have been strongly colored by the imagination of the drawers.

We have just heard from the Westward,but of no *event* of importance. Things are said to have been in good preparation; the people of Kentucky wonderfully pleased with the government; and *Scot*, with a corps of ardent volunteers, on their route to demolish every savage, man, woman, and child.

On Tuesday next I expect to leave this for New York, with Mrs. Hamilton.

TO RUFUS KING.

August 7, 1791.

Your letter of Monday evening has a good deal tranquillized me. I am glad to learn that the mischiefs from the over-use of scrip are not likely to be very extensive.

I observe what you say respecting the quotation of my opinion. I was not unaware of the delicacy of giving any, and was sufficiently reserved until I perceived the extreme to which bank scrip, and with it other stock, was tending. But when I saw this I thought it advisable to speak out—for a bubble connected with any operation is, of all the enemies I have to fear, in my judgment the most formidable; and not only not to promote, but, as far as depends on me, to counteract, delusions, appears to me to be the only secure foundation on which to stand. I thought it expedient, therefore, to risk some thing in contributing to dissolve the charm. But I find that I have been misquoted. Speaking of sales on time at seventy-four shillings for 6 per cent., etc., I think it probable I may have intimated an opinion that they went faster than could be supported. But it is untrue that I have given as a standard prices below those of the market, as mentioned by you. On the contrary, my standard, on pretty mature reflection, has been and is nearly as follows:

For bank scrip	195
6 per cents.	22
3 per cents.	12
Deferred	12 8

I proceed on the idea of 5 per cent. interest—taking at the same time into calculation the *partial irredeemability* of the 6 per cents.

I give you my standard, that you may be able if necessary to contradict insinuations of an estimation on my part short of that standard—for the purpose of depressing the funds.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 13, 1791.

DEAR SIR:

Some investigations in which I am engaged induce a wish to be able to form as accurate an idea as can be obtained of the usual product in proportion to the value of cultivated lands in different parts of the United States.

As I am persuaded no person can better assist me in this

object than yourself, I take the liberty to ask the favor of your assistance.

It has occurred to me that if the *actual* product on cultivated farms of *middling* quality could be ascertained with tolerable precision, it might afford as good a rule by which to judge as the nature of the thing admits of.

With this view I have prepared a form with a number of columns under heads specifying the different kinds of produce usual in your quarter, in order that they may be filled in each case according to the fact and as the nature of each head shall require.

There are besides some additional columns which respect the total value of the farm and the different kinds of land of which it consists.

The value of the farm must be determined not by what it would fetch in cash on a forced or sudden sale, but by what it would sell for at a reasonable and usual credit, or perhaps by what the opinion of the neighborhood would compute to be its true value.

The quantity of each kind of land must conform to the actual quantity in cultivation at the time for which the product is taken.

It is submitted to your judgment, according to circumstances, whether to determine the product by the average of a series of years, three or more, or by what has been considered as a year of middling fertility.

The price ought to express the value of each article on the farm. Perhaps to determine this there is no better rule than to deduct the expense of transportation, from the price at the nearest usual market. The high price of an extraordinary year would not be a proper criterion; but that which is deemed by intelligent and reasonable farmers a good saving price.

If not inconvenient to you to execute my present request, you will add to the favor by explaining in each case the rule by which you have proceeded; and if it would not be attended with too much trouble, the extension of the inquiry to two or three different farms would be satisfactory.

In a matter with which I am not very familiar, it is possible I may have omitted circumstances of importance to the object of my inquiry. The supplying of such omissions will be particularly acceptable.

As whatever comes from the Treasury is apt to be suspected of having reference to some scheme of taxation, it is my wish that the knowledge of this request may be confined to yourself. And I think it not amiss to add that *in truth* it has not the most remote reference to any such purpose.*

* Now first printed from the Pickering papers in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

The form inclosed is as follows:

KINDS OF LAND		Value of Farm.
		Acres of Arable Land.
		Acres of Pasture Land.
		Acres of Meadow.
		Acres of Woodland.
ANNUAL PRODUCT		Bushels of Wheat.
		Bushels of Rye.
		Bushels of Corn.
		Bushels of Oats.
		Bushels of Barley.
		Bushels of Buckwheat.
		Bushels of Potatoes.
		Other Roots and Vegetables in Value.
		Black Cattle.
		Horses.
		Sheep.
		Hogs.
		Dozens of Poultry.
		Pounds of Tobacco.
		Cords of Wood Consumed in Fuel.
		Hay.

Quantity Consumed by Cattle and Poultry Prices

TO WILLIAM SETON.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Aug. 15, 1791.

Inclosed is a resolution of the Trustees of the Sinking Fund, appropriating a certain sum for the purchase of public debt, within certain limits therein specified; in consequence of that resolution I have concluded to apply one hundred and fifty thousand dollars towards purchases in the city of New York, and to ask you to undertake the execution of the business. In this forbearing to employ some officer of the United States, and having recourse to your aid, I am governed by the consideration that your situation would lead to such an execution of the business as might at the same time best consist with the accommodation of the Bank of New York.

Inclosed is a letter to the directors of the bank, requesting them to pay to you the above-mentioned sum. You will, of course, however, only avail yourself of this authority in proportion to the actual purchases you shall make, as you will please to advise me weekly of such as you may be able to effect. The Trustees have never yet determined on any allowance to the persons who have been employed in similar purchases, nor is it clear how much is in their power on this point. I can therefore only say that the same rule will govern in your case as in that of others.*

* Now first printed, with the inclosures which follow, from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

(Inclosure.)

Whereupon it is *Resolved*:

1. That the aforesaid sum to purchase, at the following rates: To the purchase of funded stock, bearing a present interest of six per centum, at twenty shillings in the pound; funded debt, bearing an interest of three per centum, at twelve shillings in the pound; and deferred debt, at twelve shillings and sixpence in the pound.

2. That if any of the aforesaid species of debt be lower than the rates here fixed, preference be given to it.

3. That any surplus of the said purchase money or the whole, as the case, under the preceding circumstances may be, be applied in the first instance to the purchases of the three per cents and the deferred debt, as far as they can be obtained, and afterwards to the purchase of funded stock of six per cent.

TO WILLIAM SETON.

(Private.)

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 16, 1791.

I send you herewith an official letter; this private one I write as explanatory of it. I hardly expect that you will be able to procure the debt within the limits prescribed, and yet I do not know what effect the imprudent speculations in bank scrip may produce. A principal object with me is to keep the stock from falling too low in case the embarrassments of the dealers should lead to sacrifices; whence you will infer that it is not my wish that the purchases should be below the prescribed limits, yet if such should unfortunately be the state of the market, it must of course govern. The limits assigned for the purchases of 3-per-cents and deferred debt are founded on a calculation of the government rate of interest being 5 per cent. The same rule has not been extended to the stock bearing an immediate interest of 6 per cent., because the government have a right to redeem it at par in certain proportions; and though to individual purchasers it is worth more than par, because a part only can be redeemed, yet it is not at present the interest of the government to give more than par for it, because of the right to redeem a part. Indeed, the law limits the commissioners in this particular. You will recollect that the act requires that the purchases should be made openly. This has been construed to mean by a known agent for the public. When you make a purchase, therefore, it will be

4. That the cities of Philadelphia and New York be the places of purchases.

In behalf of the Board. (Signed) TH. JEFFERSON.

(Inclosure.)

To the President, Directors, and Co. of the Bank of New York:

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Aug. 16, 1791.

GENTLEMEN:

You will please cause to be paid to William Seton, Esq., such sums, not exceeding in the whole one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, as he may require, to be applied by him towards purchases of the public debt, at the request of the Trustees of the Sinking Fund; the advances you shall make, when known, will be covered in the requisite forms. Yours, etc.,

(Signed) A. HAMILTON.

proper that it should be understood that it is on account of the United States, but this need not precede the purchase; and it will be best that there should be no unnecessary demonstration, lest it should raise hopes beyond what will be realized.

P. S.—If the prices of stocks should exceed the prescribed limits, you may retain the letter to the directors. If there are any gentlemen who support the *funds* and others who *depress* them, I shall be pleased that your purchases may aid the *former*,—this in great confidence.

TO WILLIAM DUER.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 17, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I have received your two letters of the 12th and 10th.

The subscription-book for the Manufacturing Society did not remain with me nor with either of the two gentlemen who came on with me. Is it with neither of those who accompanied you? If it is not, it must have been left at Brunswick, and you will do well to write to some trusty person there to look it up and send it to you. I am impatient for the alterations which were agreed upon, and a list of the subscribers.

La Roche may go to Scioto, if he can be back in the time you mention.

I fear that in the hurry of writing my letter on the subject of bank scrip, I must have expressed myself more strongly than was intended.

The conversation here was: "Bank scrip is getting so high as to become a bubble," in one breath; in another: "'T is a South-Sea dream"; in a third: "There is a combination of knowing ones at New York to raise it as high as possible by fictitious purchases, in order to take in the credulous and ignorant"; in another: "Duer, Constable, and some others are mounting the balloon as fast as possible. If it don't soon burst, thousands will rue it," etc., etc.

As to myself, my friend, I think I know you too well to suppose you capable of such views as were implied in those

inuendoes, or to harbor the most distant thought that you could wander from the path either of public good or private integrity. But I will honestly own I had serious fears for you—for your *purse* and for your *reputation;* and with an anxiety for both, I wrote to you in earnest terms. You are sanguine, my friend. You ought to be aware of it yourself, and to be on your guard against the propensity. I feared lest it might carry you further than was consistent either with your own safety or the public good. My friendship for you and my concern for the public cause were both alarmed. If the infatuation had continued progressive, and any extensive mischiefs had ensued, you would certainly have had a large portion of the blame. Conscious of this I wrote to you in all the earnestness of apprehensive friendship.

I do not widely differ from you about the real value of bank scrip. I should rather call it about 190, to be within bounds, with hopes of better things, and I sincerely wish you may be able to support it at what you mention. The acquisition of too much of it by foreigners will certainly be an evil.

TO WILLIAM SETON.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Aug. 22, 1791.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 18th. The transfer of the stock which you have purchased on account of the United States must be made to *the Vice-President, the Chief-Justice, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of State, and the Attorney-General for the time being.*

In all future purchases, it will be most convenient to have the stock in the first instance transferred as here directed.*

TO WILLIAM SETON.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 7, 1791.

I write herewith to the directors of the Bank of New York to advance you a further sum of fifty thousand dollars towards purchases of the public debt on account of the

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

United States, on the same principles with the sum heretofore advanced to you for the like purpose.*

TO THE PRESIDENT, DIRECTORS, ETC., OF THE BANK OF NEW YORK.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 7, 1791.

GENTLEMEN:

I request you to furnish the cashier of your bank with the further sum of fifty thousand dollars, to be by him applied towards purchases of the public debts on account of the United States.

P. S.—A warrant will issue to-morrow to cover the 150,000 dollars already advanced for the same purpose.*

TO WILLIAM SETON.

(Private.)

September 7, 1791.

You will find by the letter herewith that you are furnished with a further sum of 50,000 dollars for purchases. I wish I could have gone farther, but my hands are tied by the want of a majority of the Trustees being present, Mr. Jefferson being just gone to Virginia. The $50,000 now authorized, and the sum appropriated here for the same purpose, complete what has yet determined to be applied.

You may, however, make it known that the treasurer is purchasing here, etc.*

TO WILLIAM SETON.

(Private.)

September 8, 1791.

I wrote you a private letter last evening, which went by a private opportunity. The principal object was to inform you that I could not exceed the sum now directed to be advanced for want of authority, the present $50,000 completing

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

the sum heretofore appropriated by the Trustees, and there not being here a sufficient number for a Board; that purchases by the Treasurer were going on here—*

TO A FRIEND.

DEAR SIR: September 30, 1791.

If you can conveniently let me have twenty dollars for a few days, be so good as to send it by bearer. I have just put myself out of cash by payment of Major L'Enfant's bill.†

TO WASHINGTON.

SIR: PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 11, 1791.

Lord Wycomb having mentioned to me his intentions to pay you his respects at Mount Vernon, I beg your permission to present him to you.

The personal acquirements and merits of his lordship conspire, with a consideration for the friendly dispositions and liberal policy of his father, the Marquis of Lansdowne, towards this country, to constitute a claim in his favor to cordial notice.

TO GENERAL KNOX.

DEAR SIR: October 17, 1791.

The following are the particulars in the President's letter which he expects you to prepare.

Expeditions against the Indians. Every pacific measure was previously tried to produce accord and avoid expense.

More pointed laws, with penalties to restrain our own people; and this and good faith may produce tranquillity.

Treaties with Cherokees and Six Nations, and reasons.

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

† Reprinted from "Reminiscences of J. A. Hamilton," p. 7. The letter is a curious one, because it shows how really pressed Hamilton was for even small sums of money. On the back of the letter is the following:—

Memorandum by the lender:—"Gave a check for fifty dollars, dated Sept. 30, 1791."

I annex to the first the hints in the President's letter.

You will, of course, send any other things that occur on *any point*.*

TO WILLIAM SETON.

MY DEAR SIR: November 25, 1791.

I seize the first moment of leisure to answer your letter of the 21st inst. Strange as it may appear to you, it is not more strange than true that the whole affair of branches was *begun, continued,* and *ended,* not only without my participation, but *against my judgment.*

When I say against my judgment, you will not understand that my opinion was given and overruled, for I never was consulted,; but that the steps taken were contrary to my private opinion of the course which ought to have been pursued.

I am sensible of the inconveniences to be apprehended, and I regret them, but I do not know that it will be in my power to avert them.

Ultimately it will be incumbent on me to place the public funds in the keeping of the branch; but it *may be depended upon* that I shall *precipitate nothing,* but shall so conduct the transfer as not to embarrass or distress your institution. I have not time to say more at present, except that if there are *finally* to be two institutions, my regard for you makes me wish you may feel yourself at liberty to take your fortune with the branch which must preponderate.

TO PHILIP HAMILTON.†

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 5, 1791.

I received with great pleasure, my dear Philip, the letter which you wrote me last week. Your mamma and myself were very happy to learn that you are pleased with your situation, and content to stay as long as shall be thought

* Now first printed from the Knox papers in the possession of the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

† His eldest son.

best for you. We hope and believe that nothing will happen to alter this disposition. Your master also informs us that you recited a lesson the first day you began, very much to his satisfaction. I expect every letter from him will give me a fresh proof of your progress, for I know you can do a great deal if you please, and I am sure you have too much spirit not to exert yourself that you may make us every day more and more proud of you. You remember that I engaged to send for you next Saturday, and I will do it, unless you request me to put it off, for a promise must never be broken, and I never will make you one which I will not fill as far as I am able; but it has occurred to me that the Christmas holidays are near at hand, and I suppose your school will then break up for a few days and give you an opportunity of coming to stay with us for a longer time than if you should come on Saturday. Will it not be best, therefore, to put off your journey till the holidays? But determine as you like best, and let me know what will be most pleasing to you. A good night to my darling son.*

TO NICHOLAS GOUVERNEUR.†

1792.

Mr. B. last evening delivered me your letter, enclosing a copy of your correspondence with Mr. Lewis. In one other respect I feel myself painfully situated, having received a favorable impression of your character. I am sorry to observe any thing to have come from you which I am obliged to consider as exceptionable. Your second letter to Mr. Lewis contains a general, and of course an unjustifiable reflection on the profession to which I belong, and of a nature to put it out of my power to render you any service in the line of that profession. I really belive that you did not attend to the full force of the expression when you tell Mr. Lewis, "Attorneys like to make the most of their bills of cost"; but it contains in it other insinuations which cannot

* Reprinted from the "Reminiscences of J. A. Hamilton," p. 4.

† A merchant of New York.

be pleasing to any man in the profession, and which must oblige any one that has the proper delicacy to decline the business of a person who professedly entertains such an idea of the conduct of this profession. I make allowance for your feelings when you wrote that letter, and am therefore reluctantly drawn into these observations.*

TO GULIAN VERPLANCK AND OTHERS.

GENTLEMEN: PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 15, 1792.

The mark of esteem on the part of fellow-citizens, to whom I am attached by so many ties, which is announced in your letter of the 29th of December, is entitled to my affectionate acknowledgments.

I shall cheerfully obey their wish as far as respects the taking of my portrait, but I ask that they will permit it to appear unconnected with any incident of my political life. The simple representation of their fellow-citizen and friend will best accord with my feelings.

TO WILLIAM SETON.

MY DEAR SIR: PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 24, 1792.

I feel great satisfaction in knowing from yourself that your institution rejects the idea of a coalition with the new project, or rather hydra of projects.

I shall labor to give what has taken place a turn favorable to another union, the propriety of which is, as you say, clearly illustrated by the present state of things. It is my wish that the Bank of New York may, by all means, continue to receive deposits from the Collector in the paper of the Bank of the United States, and that they may also receive payment for the Dutch bills in the same paper. This paper may either be remitted to the Treasurer, or remain in the bank, as itself shall deem most expedient. I have explicitly directed the Treasurer to forbear drawing on the Bank of New York without special direction from me. And

*Reprinted from "Reminiscences of J. A. Hamilton," p. 6.

my intention is to leave you in possession of all the money you have or may receive till I am assured that the present storm is effectually weathered.

Everybody here sees the propriety of your having refused the paper of the Bank of the United States in such a crisis of your affairs. Be confidential with me; if you are pressed, whatever support may be in my power shall be afforded. I consider the public interest as materially involved in aiding a valuable institution like yours to withstand the attacks of a confederated host of frantic and, I fear, in too many instances, unprincipled gamblers.

Adieu. Heaven take care of good men and good views!

TO WILLIAM DUER.*

MY DEAR DUER: PHILADELPHIA, March 14, 1792.

Your letter of the 11th got to hand this day. I am affected beyond measure at its contents, especially as it was too late to have any influence upon the event you were apprehensive of, Mr. Wolcott's instructions having gone off yesterday.

I trust, however, the alternative which they present to the attorney of the , and the discretion he will use in managing the affair, will enable you to avoid any pernicious *éclat*, if your affairs are otherwise retrievable.

Be this as it may, act with *fortitude* and *honor*. If you cannot reasonably hope for a favorable extrication, do not plunge deeper. Have the courage to make a full stop. Take all the care you can in the first place of institutions of public utility, and in the next of all fair creditors.

God bless you, and take care of you and your family. I have experienced all the bitterness of soul on your account which a warm attachment can inspire. I will not now pain you with any wise remarks, though if you recover the present stroke, I shall take great liberties with you. Assure yourself, in good and bad fortune, of my sincere friendship and affection.

* Duer had speculated deeply and failed disastrously.

TO WILLIAM SETON.

(*Private.*)

PHILADELPHIA, March 25, 1792.

If six per cents. should sink below par, you may purchase on account of the United States at par to the extent of fifty thousand dollars. You will not, however, declare on whose account you act, because, though there is, as to a purchase on that principle, no difference of opinion among the trustees, the thing is not formally arranged, and this is Sunday.

It will be very probably conjectured that you appear for the public, and the conjecture may be left to have its course, but without confession. The purchase ought, in the present state of things, to be at auction, and not till to-morrow evening. But if the purchase at auction will not tend as well to the purpose of relief as a different mode, it may be departed from; the usual note must be made of persons, time, etc. You will consider whether done all at once, or a part now and a part then, will best answer the purpose; in the state of this market the latter mode is found preferable. I have just received a letter from Mr. Short, our minister resident, dated Amsterdam, 28th December, by which he informs me that he has effected a loan for three millions of florins at four per cent. interest, on account of the United States. This may be announced; and as, in the present moment of suspicion, some minds may be disposed to consider the thing as a mere expedient to support the stocks, I pledge my honor for its exact truth. Why then so much despondency among the holders of our stock? When foreigners lend the United States at four per cent., will they not purchase here upon a similar scale, making reasonable allowance for expense of agency, etc.? Why then do individuals part with so good a property so much below its value? Does Duer's failure affect the solidity of the government?

After paying the present quarter's interest I shall have near a million dollars in cash, and a million more in bonds

from the duties of last year. All this is truly so much beforehand. The duties for the current year being fully adequate to the objects of the year, except the further sum of about five hundred thousand dollars for the western expedition, for which the ways and means have been proposed. Is the treasury of Great Britain comparatively in so good a state? Is the nation comparatively so equal to its debt? Why then so much depression? I shall be answered, the immediate necessity for money. But if the banks are forbearing as to the necessity of paying up, cannot the parties give each other *mutual credit* and avoid so great a press? If there are a few *harpies* who will not concur in this forbearance, let such be paid and execrated, and let others forbear. The necessity of great sacrifices among your dealers cannot affect the nation, but it may deeply wound the city of New York by a transfer to foreigners and citizens of other States of a large mass of property greatly below its value. The face of your affairs may undergo for a considerable time a serious change. Would not the plan I suggested to you in my last be a means of securing more effectually the debts due to the bank by accepting in part payment *the credits* on your books?

While I encourage due exertion in the banks, I observe that I hope they will put nothing to risk. No calamity truly *public* can happen while these institutions remain sound. They must, therefore, not yield too far to the impulse of circumstances.

TO WILLIAM SETON.

(*Private.*)

PHILADELPHIA, April 4, 1792.

The post of to-day brought me a letter from you. I am pained beyond expression at the picture you and others give me of the situation of my fellow-citizens, especially as an ignorance of the extent of the disorder renders it impossible to judge whether any adequate remedy can be applied.

You may apply another 50,000 dollars to purchases at

such a time as you judge it can be rendered most useful. The prices may be 20*s.* for 6 per cents., 12*s.* for 3 per cents., and 12*s.* 6*d.* for deferred. The law and the object require that it should be known you purchase for the public. I shall by the next post send an official authorization.

I have doubt, however, whether it will be best to apply this immediately or wait the happening of the crisis, which I fear is inevitable. If, as is represented, a pretty extensive explosion is to take place, the depression of the funds at such a moment will be in the extreme, and then it may be more important than now to enter the market in force. I can in such a case without difficulty add a hundred thousand dollars—probably a larger sum. But you, who are on the spot, being best able to calculate consequences, I leave the proper moment of operating to your judgment. To relieve the distressed and support the funds are primary objects. As it may possibly become advisable for the bank to receive *payments* in stock from embarrassed persons, it may not be amiss that you should know as a guide that there are at this moment orders from a respectable Dutch concern to purchase 6 per cents. at 24*s.* if bills can be sold at par; of this I have the most *unequivocal* evidence. This is a proof that foreigners will be willing to give that price. How vexatious that imprudent speculations of individuals should lead to an alienation of the national property at such under-rates as are now given! I presume your greatest embarrassments arise from the contracts to pay and deliver not yet at issue. Is it possible to form any conjecture of their extent?

TO WILLIAM SETON.

(*Private.*)

PHILADELPHIA, April 12, 1792.

I have your letters of the 10th and 11th, and, more to my distress and surprise, I learn by other letters a confirmation of what you apprehended, namely, Mr. Macomb's failure. This misfortune has, I fear, a long tail to it.

The enclosed, you will perceive, gives you additional latitude. The terms as heretofore for 6 per cents., 20*s.*; 3 per cents., 12*s.*; and deferred 12*s.* 6*d.*

You must judge of the best mode and manner of applying the sum. The operation here not being extensive, I have found it best to eke out my aid. I doubt whether this will answer with you. My reason was to keep up men's spirits by appearing often, though not much at one time. All is left to you. You will doubtless be cautious in securing your transfer before you pay.

TO THE DIRECTORS AND COMPANY OF THE BANK OF NEW YORK.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, April 12, 1792.

GENTLEMEN:

Since my official letter to you authorizing an advance to your cashier of fifty thousand dollars, to be applied to the purchase of public debt on account of the United States, I have authorized that gentleman to apply for another fifty thousand dollars, and to make the like use of it. I now confirm this direction, and add my desire that he may be furnished with a further sum of fifty thousand dollars, making in the whole one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, the whole for the purpose above mentioned.

TO WILLIAM SETON.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, May 10, 1792.

SIR:

I received your letter of the 7th inst., covering an account of stock purchased by you for the United States.

I observe that you have exceeded the sum which was limited by me to the amount of one thousand and ninety-eight dollars and eighty-nine cents; but so small a difference is not very material, and I am willing that the whole should remain on account of the United States.

In order to a winding up of the business, I have now to

request that you will, as soon as it can be conveniently done, cause all the stock to be transferred in the names of the trustees as heretofore, and that you will then procure from the commissioner and forward to me the necessary certificates for transferring the stock from the books of the commissioner to those of the treasurer.

You will please to accept of my best acknowledgment for this additional mark of your zeal for the public service, and believe me to be, etc.

TO WILLIAM DUER.

April 22, 1792.

MY DEAR DUER:

I hoped ere this to have seen you, to have afforded you whatever of aid could have resulted from my advice, after knowing your real situation. But the session protracts itself, and I can scarcely say when it will finish. Lest the information contained in my last should induce you to postpone an arrangement with your creditors in the hope of speedily having an opportunity of consulting me, I have thought it best to apprise you of the degree of delay which may attend my proposed visit to New York. Indeed, I can hardly flatter myself that my advice could be of any real importance to you.

How are you? How are your family? At a moment of composure I shall be glad to hear from you.

Eliza joins me in affectionate remembrances to Lady Kitty.* Farewell.

TO WILLIAM DUER.

May 23, 1792.

My dear Duer, five minutes ago I received your letter of yesterday. I hasten to express to you my thoughts, as your

* "Lady Kitty" was Duer's wife. Mrs. Duer who was a beauty and belle in the society of that day (See Griswold's "Republican Court") was Katherine Alexander, daughter of William Alexander, the unsuccessful claimant to the earldom of Stirling. He was, as is well known, a distinguished officer in our war for independence, and was commonly called "Lord Stirling," from which his youngest daughter came to be known as "Lady Kitty."

situation does not permit of delay. I am of opinion that those friends who have lent you their money or security from personal confidence in your honor, and without being interested in the operations in which you may have been engaged, ought to be taken care of absolutely, and preferably to all creditors. In the next place, public institutions ought to be secured. On this point the manufacturing society will claim peculiar regard. I am told the funds of that society have been drawn out of both banks; I trust they are not diverted. The public interest and my reputation are deeply concerned in the matter. Your affairs with the government, as connected with your office as assistant to the Board of Treasury, will deserve your particular attention. Persons of whom you have made actual purchases and whose property has been delivered to you, would stand next after public institutions. But here perhaps some arbitration may be made. It would certainly be desirable to distinguish between the price of stock at the time of purchase and its enhanced price upon time. With regard to contracts merely executory, and in regard to which diferences would be to be paid, no stock having been delivered, I postpone claims of this nature to all others. They ought not to interfere with any claim which is founded on value actually given. As to the usurious tribe: these present themselves under different aspects. Are these women, or ignorant people, or trustees of infants? The real principal advanced and legal interest would, in such cases, stand, in my mind, on high ground. The mere veteran usurers may be taken greater liberties with. Their real principal and interest, however, abstracted from usurious accumulation, would stand better than claims constituted wholly by profits from speculative bargains. But the following course deserves consideration: Take care of debts to friends who have aided you by their money or credit disinterestedly, and the public institutions. Assign the rest of your property for the benefit of creditors generally. The law will do the rest. Whenever usury can be proved, the contract, I take

it, will be null. Where it cannot be proved, the parties will be obliged to acknowledge on oath, and then their principal and interest only will be due. Wherever a fair account can be stated, and all the sums borrowed and paid can be set against each other, it is probable it will be found that more has been paid than, on a computation of legal interest, was ever received. Here, I presume, the demand would be extinguished, and possibly the parties would be compelled to disgorge. These are rather desultory thoughts than a systematic view of the subject. I wish I had more time to form a more digested opinion, but as I have not you must take what I can give. Adieu, my unfortunate friend. God bless you and extricate you with reputation. Again adieu. Be honorable, calm, and firm.*

TO WILLIAM SETON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 25, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

The society for the establishing of useful manufactures, at their last meeting resolved to borrow a sum of five thousand dollars upon a pledge of deferred stock. Mr. Walker is empowered to negotiate the loan, and I expect application will be made to the Bank of New York for it. I have a strong wish that the directors of that bank may be disposed to give facilities to this institution upon terms of perfect safety to itself. I will add that from its situation it is much the interest of our city that it should succeed. It is not difficult to discern the advantage of being the immediate market of a considerable manufacturing town. A pledge of public stock will completely fulfil the idea of perfect security. I will add more, that in my opinion banks ought to afford accommodation in such cases upon easy terms of interest. I think five per cent. ought to suffice, for a direct public good is presented. And institutions of this kind, within reasonable limits, ought to consider it as a principal object to promote beneficial public purposes.

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," iv., 289.

To you, my dear sir, I will not scruple to say *in confidence* that the Bank of New York shall suffer no diminution of its *pecuniary facilities* from any accommodation it may afford to the society in question. I feel my reputation much concerned in its welfare.

I would not wish any formal communication of this letter to the directors, but you may make known my wishes to such of them as you may judge expedient.

[TO COLONEL EDWARD CARRINGTON.*]

PHILADELPHIA, May 26, 1792.]

MY DEAR SIR:

Believing that I possess a share of your personal friendship and confidence, and yielding to that which I feel towards you; persuaded also, that our political creed is the same on two essential points—first, the necessity of Union to the respectability and happiness of this country, and second, the necessity of an efficient general government to maintain that Union, I have concluded to unbosom myself to you, on the present state of political parties and views. I will ask no reply to what I shall say; I only ask that you will be persuaded the representations I shall make are agreeable to the real and sincere impressions of my mind. You will make the due allowance for the influence of circumstances upon it; you will consult your own observations, and you will draw such a conclusion as shall appear to you proper. When I accepted the office I now hold, it was under full persuasion, that from similarity of thinking, conspiring with personal good-will, I should have the firm support of Mr. Madison, in the general course of my administration. Aware of the intrinsic difficulties of the situation, and of the powers of Mr. Madison, I do not believe I should have accepted under a different supposition. I have mentioned the similarity of thinking between that gentleman and myself. This was relative, not merely to the general principles of national

* Col. Carrington, of Virginia, was an old and trusted friend of Hamilton.

policy and government, but to the leading points, which were likely to constitute questions in the administration of the finances. I mean, first, the expediency of funding the debt; second, the inexpediency of discrimination between original and present holders; third, the expediency of assuming the State debts.

As to the first point, the evidence of Mr. Madison's sentiments, at one period, is to be found in the address of Congress, of April twenty-sixth, seventeen hundred and eighty-three, which was planned by him, in conformity to his own ideas, and without any previous suggestions from the committee, and with his hearty co-operation in every part of the business. His conversations upon various occasions since have been expressive of a continuance in the same sentiment; nor, indeed, has he yet contradicted it, by any part of his official conduct. How far there is reason to apprehend a change in this particular, will be stated hereafter. As to the second part, the same address is an evidence of Mr. Madison's sentiments at the same period. And I had been informed that at a later period he had been, in the Legislature of Virginia, a strenuous and successful opponent of the principle of discrimination. Add to this, that a variety of conversations had taken place between him and myself, respecting the public debt, down to the commencement of the new government, in none of which had he glanced at the idea of a change of opinion. I wrote him a letter after my appointment, in the recess of Congress, to obtain his sentiments on the subject of the finances. In his answer, there is not a lisp of his new system.

As to the third point, the question of an assumption of the State debts by the United States was in discussion when the convention that framed the present government was sitting at Philadelphia, and in a long conversation which I had with Mr. Madison in an afternoon's walk, I well remember that we were perfectly agreed in the expediency and propriety of such a measure; though we were both of opinion that it would be more advisable to make it a measure of administra-

tion than an article of Constitution, from the impolicy of multiplying obstacles to its reception on collateral details.

Under these circumstances you will naturally imagine that it must have been matter of surprise to me when I was apprised that it was Mr. Madison's intention to oppose my plan on both the last-mentioned points. Before the debate commenced,* I had a conversation with him on my report; in the course of which I alluded to the calculation I had made of his sentiments, and the grounds of that calculation. He did not deny them; but alleged in his justification that the very considerable alienation of the debt, subsequent to the periods at which he had opposed a discrimination, had essentially changed the state of the question; and that as to the assumption, he had contemplated it to take place as matters stood at the peace. While the change of opinion avowed on the point of discrimination diminished my respect for the force of Mr. Madison's mind and the soundness of his judgment; and while the idea of reserving and setting afloat a vast mass of already extinguished debt, as the condition of a measure, the leading objects of which were an accession of strength to the national government, and an assurance of order and vigor in the national finances, by doing away with the necessity of thirteen complicated and conflicting systems of finance, appeared to me somewhat extraordinary, yet my previous impressions of the fairness of Mr. Madison's character, and my reliance on his good-will towards me, disposed me to believe that his suggestions were sincere, and even on the point of an assumption of the debts of the States as they stood at the peace, to lean towards a co-operation in his views, till on feeling the ground I found the thing impracticable, and on further reflection I thought it liable to immense difficulties. It was tried and failed with little countenance.

* Hamilton to Madison: If Mr. Madison should be disengaged this evening, Mr. Hamilton would be obliged by an opportunity of conversing with him at his lodgings for half an hour. If engaged this evening, he will thank him to say, whether to-morrow evening will suit. Wednesday.

At this time and afterwards repeated intimations were given to me that Mr. Madison, from a spirit of rivalship, or some other cause, had become personally unfriendly to me; and one gentleman in particular, whose honor I have no reason to doubt, assured me that Mr. Madison, in a conversation with him, had made a pretty direct attempt to insinuate unfavorable impressions of me. Still I suspended my opinion on the subject. I knew the malevolent officiousness of mankind too well to yield a very ready acquiescence to the suggestions which were made, and resolved to wait till time and more experience should afford a solution. It was not till the last session that I became unequivocally convinced of the following truth: "that Mr. Madison, cooperating with Mr. Jefferson, is at the head of a faction decidedly hostile to me and my administration; and actuated by views, in my judgment, subversive of the principles of good government and dangerous to the Union, peace, and happiness of the country."

These are strong expressions, they may pain your friendship for one or both of the gentlemen whom I have named. I have not lightly resolved to hazard them. They are the result of a serious alarm in my mind for the public welfare, and of a full conviction that what I have alleged is a truth, and a truth which ought to be told, and well attended to by all the friends of the Union and efficient national government. The suggestion will, I hope, at least, awaken attention free from the bias of former prepossessions.

This conviction, in my mind, is the result of a long train of circumstances, many of them minute. To attempt to detail them all would fill a volume. I shall therefore confine myself to the mention of a few.

First.—As to the point of opposition to me and my administration.

Mr. Jefferson, with very little reserve, manifests his dislike of the funding system generally, calling in question the expediency of funding a debt at all. Some expressions, which he has dropped in my presence (sometimes without

sufficient attention to delicacy), will not permit me to doubt on this point representations which I have had from various respectable quarters. I do not mean that he advocates directly the undoing of what has been done, but he censures the whole, on principles which, if they should become general, could not but end in the subversion of the system. In various conversations, with foreigners as well as citizens, he has thrown censure on my principles of government and on my measures of administration. He has predicted that the people would not long tolerate my proceedings, and that I should not long maintain my ground. Some of those whom he immediately and notoriously moves have even whispered suspicions of the rectitude of my motives and conduct. In the question concerning the bank he not only delivered an opinion in writing against its constitutionality and expediency, but he did it in a style and manner which I felt as partaking of asperity and ill humor towards me. As one of the trustees of the sinking fund, I have experienced in almost every leading question opposition from him. When any turn of things in the community has threatened either odium or embarrassment to me, he has not been able to suppress the satisfaction which it gave him. A part of this is, of course, information, and might be misrepresentation, but it comes through so many channels, and so well accords with what falls under my own observation, that I can entertain no doubt.

I find a strong confirmation in the following circumstances: Freneau, the present printer of the *National Gazette*, who was a journeyman with Childs & Swain, at New York, was a known Anti-federalist. It is reduced to a certainty that he was brought to Philadelphia by Mr. Jefferson to be the conductor of a newspaper. It is notorious that contemporarily with the commencement of his paper he was a clerk in the Department of State, for foreign languages. Hence a clear inference that his paper has been set on foot and is conducted under the patronage and not against the views of Mr. Jefferson. What then is the com-

plexion of this paper? Let any impartial man peruse all the numbers down to the present day, and I never was more mistaken if he does not pronounce that it is a paper devoted to the subversion of me and the measures in which I have had an agency; and I am little less mistaken if he does not pronounce that it is a paper of a tendency generally unfriendly to the government of the United States. It may be said that a newspaper being open to all the publications which are offered to it, its complexion may be influenced by other views than those of the editor. But the fact here is that whenever the editor appears it is in a correspondent dress. The paragraphs which appear as his own, the publications, not original, which are selected for his press, are of the same malignant and unfriendly aspect; so as not to leave a doubt of the temper which directs the publication. Again, Brown, who publishes an evening paper called *The Federal Gazette*, was originally a zealous Federalist, and personally friendly to me. He has been employed by Mr. Jefferson as a printer to the government for the publication of the laws, and for some time past, until lately, the complexion of his press was equally bitter and unfriendly to me and to the government.

Lately Col. Pickering, in consequence of certain attacks upon him, got hold of some instances of malconduct of his which have served to hold him in check, and seemed to have varied his tone a little. I don't lay so much stress on this last case as on the former. There I find an internal evidence, which is as conclusive as can be expected in any similar case. Thus far as to Mr. Jefferson.

With regard to Mr. Madison, the matter stands thus: I have not heard, but in the one instance to which I have alluded, of his having held language unfriendly to me in private conversation, but in his public conduct there has been a more uniform and persevering opposition than I have been able to resolve into a sincere difference of opinion. I cannot persuade myself that Mr. Madison and I, whose politics had formerly so much the same point of departure,

should now diverge so widely in our opinions of the measures which are proper to be pursued. The opinion I once entertained of the candor and simplicity and fairness of Mr. Madison's character, has, I acknowledge, given way to a decided opinion that it is one of a peculiarly artificial and complicated kind. For a considerable part of the last session Mr. Madison lay in a great measure perdu. But it was evident from his votes and a variety of little movements and appearances, that he was the prompter of Mr. Giles and others who were the open instruments of the opposition. Two facts occurred in the course of the session which I view as unequivocal demonstrations of his disposition towards me. In one, a direct and decisive blow was aimed. When the Department of the Treasury was established, Mr. Madison was an unequivocal advocate of the principles which prevailed in it, and of the powers and duties which were assigned by it to the head of the department. This appeared, both from his private and public discourse, and I will add, that I have personal evidence that Mr. Madison is as well convinced as any man in the United States of the necessity of the arrangement which characterizes that establishment, to the orderly conducting of the business of the finances. Mr. Madison nevertheless opposed a reference to me to report ways and means for the Western expedition, and combated, on principle, the propriety of such references.

He well knew that if he had prevailed a certain consequence was my resignation; that I would not be fool enough to make pecuniary sacrifices and endure a life of extreme drudgery without opportunity either to do material good or to acquire reputation, and frequently with a responsibility in reputation for measures in which I had no hand, and in respect to which the part I had acted, if any, could not be known. To accomplish this point an effectual train, as was supposed, was laid. Besides those who ordinarily acted under Mr. Madison's banners, several who had generally acted with me, from various motives—vanity, self-importance, etc., etc.,—were enlisted.

My overthrow was anticipated as certain, and Mr. Madison, laying aside his wonted caution, boldly led his troops, as he imagined, to a certain victory. He was disappointed. Though late, I became apprised of the danger. Measures of counteraction were adopted, and when the question was called Mr. Madison was confounded to find characters voting against him whom he counted upon as certain. Towards the close of the session another, though a more covert, attack was made. It was in the shape of a proposition to insert in the supplementary act respecting the public debt something by way of instruction to the trustees "to make their purchases of the debt at the lowest market price." In the course of the discussion of this point Mr. Madison dealt much in insidious insinuations calculated to give an impression that the public money, under my particular direction, had been unfaithfully applied to put undue advantages in the pockets of speculators, and to support the debt at an artificial price for their benefit. The whole manner of this transaction left no doubt in any one's mind that Mr. Madison was actuated by personal and political animosity. As to this last instance, it is but candid to acknowledge that Mr. Madison had a better right to act the enemy than on any former occasion. I had, some short time before, subsequent to his conduct respecting the reference, declared openly my opinion of the views by which he was actuated towards me, and my determination to consider and treat him as a political enemy. An intervening proof of Mr. Madison's unfriendly intrigues to my disadvantage is to be found in the following incident, which I relate to you upon my honor, but, from the nature of it, you will perceive in the strictest confidence: The President, having prepared his speech at the commencement of the ensuing session, communicated it to Mr. Madison for his remarks. It contained, among other things, a clause concerning weights and measures, hinting the advantage of an invariable standard, which preceded, in the original state of the speech, a clause containing the mint. Mr. Madison suggested a transposition of these clauses and the addition

of certain words, which I now forget, imparting an immediate connection between the two subjects. You may recollect that Mr. Jefferson proposes that the unit of weight and the unit in the coins shall be the same, and that my propositions are to preserve the dollar as a unit, adhering to its present quantity of silver and establishing the same proportion of alloy in the silver as in the gold coins. The evident design of this manœuvre was to commit the President's opinion in favor of Mr. Jefferson's idea in contradiction to mine, and, the worst of it is, without his being aware of the tendency of the thing. It happened that the President showed me the speech, altered in conformity to Mr. Madison's suggestion, just before it was copied for the purpose of being delivered. I remarked to him the tendency of the alteration. He declared that he had not been aware of it, and had no such intention, and without hesitation agreed to expunge the words which were designed to connect the two subjects.

This transaction, in my opinion, not only furnishes a proof of Mr. Madison's intrigues in opposition to my measures, but charges him with an abuse of the President's confidence in him, by endeavoring to make him, without his knowledge, take part with one officer against another in a case in which they had given different opinions to the Legislature of the country. I forbore to awake the President's mind to this last inference, but it is among the circumstances which have convinced me that Mr. Madison's true character is the reverse of that simple, fair, candid one which he has assumed. I have informed you that Mr. Freneau was brought to Philadelphia by Mr. Jefferson, to be conductor of a newspaper. My information announced Mr. Madison as the means of negotiation, while he was at New York last summer. This, and the general coincidence and close intimacy between the two gentlemen, leave no doubt that their views are substantially the same.

Secondly, as to the tendency of the views of the two gentlemen who have been named. Mr. Jefferson is an avowed enemy to a funded debt. Mr. Madison disavows, in public,

any intention to undo what has been done, but, in private conversation with Mr. Charles Carroll, Senator, (this gentleman's name I mention confidentially, though he mentioned the matter to Mr. King and several other gentlemen as well as myself, and if any chance should bring you together you would easily bring him to repeat it to you,) he favored the sentiment in Mr. Mercer's speech, that a Legislature had no right to fund the debt by mortgaging permanently the public revenues, because they had no right to bind posterity. The inference is that what has been unlawfully done may be undone.

The discourse of partisans in the Legislature, and the publication in the party newspapers, direct their main battery against the principle of a funded debt, and represent it in the most odious light as a perfect Pandora's box.

If Mr. Barnwell of South Carolina, who appears to be a man of nice honor, may be credited, Mr. Giles declared, in a conversation with him, that if there was a question for reversing the funding system on the abstract point of the right of pledging and the utility of preserving public faith, he should be for reversal, merely to demonstate his sense of the defect of right and the inutility of the thing. If positions equally extravagant were not publicly advanced by some of the party, and secretly countenanced by the most guarded and discreet of them, one would be led, from the absurdity of the declaration, to suspect misapprehension. But, from what is known, any thing may be believed. Whatever were the original merits of the funding system, after having been so solemnly adopted, and after so great a transfer of property under it, what would become of the government should it be reversed? What of the national reputation? Upon what system of morality can so atrocious a doctrine be maintained? In me, I confess it excites indignation and horror!

What are we to think of those maxims of government by which the power of a Legislature is denied to bind the nation, by a contract in the affair of property for twenty-

four years? For this is precisely the case of the debt. What are to become of all the legal rights of property, of all charters to corporations, nay, of all grants to a man, his heirs and assigns, for ever, if this doctrine be true? What is the term for which a government is in capacity to contract? Questions might be multiplied without end, to demonstrate the perniciousness and absurdity of such a doctrine.

In almost all the questions, great and small, which have arisen since the first session of Congress, Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison have been found among those who are disposed to narrow the federal authority. The question of a national bank is one example. The question of bounties to the fisheries is another. Mr. Madison resisted it on the ground of constitutionality, till it was evident, by the intermediate questions taken, that the bill would pass; and he then, under the wretched subterfuge of a change of a single word, "bounty" for "allowance," went over to the majority, and voted for the bill. On the militia bill, and in a variety of minor cases, he has leaned to abridging the exercise of federal authority, and leaving as much as possible to the States; and he lost no opportunity of sounding the alarm, with great affected solemnity, at encroachments, meditated on the rights of the States, and of holding up the bugbear of a faction in the government having designs unfriendly to liberty.

This kind of conduct has appeared to me the more extraordinary on the part of Mr. Madison, as I know for a certainty, it was a primary article in his creed, that the real danger in our system was the subversion of the national authority by the preponderancy of the State governments. All his measures have proceeded on an opposite supposition. I recur again to the instance of Freneau's paper. In matters of this kind one cannot have direct proof of men's latent views; they must be inferred from circumstances. As coadjutor of Mr. Jefferson in the establishment of this paper, I include Mr. Madison in the consequences imputable to

it. In respect to foreign politics, the views of these gentlemen are, in my judgment, equally unsound and dangerous. They have a womanish attachment to France and a womanish resentment against Great Britain. They would draw us into the closest embrace of the former, and involve us in all the consequences of her politics; and they would risk the peace of the country in their endeavors to keep us at the greatest possible distance from the latter. This disposition goes to a length, particularly in Mr. Jefferson, of which, till lately, I had no adequate idea. Various circumstances prove to me that if these gentlemen were left to pursue their own course, there would be, in less than six months, an open war between the United States and Great Britain. I trust I have a due sense of the conduct of France towards this country in the late revolution; and that I shall always be among the foremost in making her every suitable return; but there is a wide difference between this and implicating ourselves in all her politics; between bearing good-will to her and hating and wrangling with all those whom she hates. The neutral and the pacific policy appears to me to mark the true path to the United States.

Having delineated to you what I conceive to be the true complexion of the politics of these gentlemen, I will now attempt a solution of these strange appearances. Mr. Jefferson, it is known, did not in the first instance cordially acquiesce in the new Constitution for the United States; he had many doubts and reserves. He left this country before we had experienced the imbecilities of the former.

In France, he saw government only on the side of its abuses. He drank freely of the French philosophy, in religion, in science, in politics. He came from France in the moment of a fermentation, which he had a share in exciting, and in the passions and feelings of which he shared both from temperament and situation. He came here probably with a too partial idea of his own powers; and with the expectation of a greater share in the direction of our councils than he has in reality enjoyed. I am not sure that he

had not peculiarly marked out for himself the department of the finances.

He came, electrified with attachment to France, and with the project of knitting together the two countries in the closest political bands.

Mr. Madison had always entertained an exalted opinion of the talents, knowledge, and virtues of Mr. Jefferson. The sentiment was probably reciprocal. A close correspondence subsisted between them during the time of Mr. Jefferson's absence from the country. A close intimacy arose upon his return.

Whether any peculiar opinions of Mr. Jefferson's concerning the public debt wrought a change in the sentiments of Mr. Madison (for it is certain that the former is more radically wrong than the latter), or whether Mr. Madison, seduced by the expectation of popularity, and possibly by the calculation of advantage to the State of Virginia, was led to change his own opinion, certain it is that a very material change took place, and that the two gentlemen were united in the new ideas. Mr. Jefferson was indiscreetly open in his approbation of Mr. Madison's principles, upon his first coming to the seat of government. I say indiscreetly, because a gentleman in the administration, in one department, ought not to have taken sides against another, in another department. The course of this business and a variety of circumstances which took place left Mr. Madison a very discontented and chagrined man, and begot some degree of ill-humor in Mr. Jefferson. Attempts were made by these gentlemen, in different ways, to produce a commercial warfare with Great Britain. In this, too, they were disappointed. And, as they had the liveliest wishes on the subject, their dissatisfaction has been proportionably great; and, as I had not favored the project, I was comprehended in their displeasure.

These causes, and perhaps some others, created, much sooner than I was aware of it, a systematic opposition to me, on the part of these gentlemen. My subversion, I am now satisfied, has been long an object with them.

Subsequent events have increased the spirit of opposition and the feelings of personal mortification on the part of these gentlemen.

A mighty stand was made on the affair of the bank. There was much commitment in that case. I prevailed. On the mint business I was opposed from the same quarters and with still less success. In the affair of ways and means for the Western expedition, on the supplementary arrangements concerning the debt, except as to the additional assumption, my views have been equally prevalent in opposition to theirs. This current of success on the one side and of defeat on the other has rendered the opposition furious, and has produced a disposition to subvert their competitors, even at the expense of the government.

Another circumstance has contributed to widening the breach. 'T is evident, beyond a question, from every movement, that Mr. Jefferson aims with ardent desire at the Presidential chair. This, too, is an important object of the party-politics. It is supposed, from the nature of my former personal and political connections, that I may favor some other candidate more than Mr. Jefferson, when the question shall occur by the retreat of the present gentleman. My influence, therefore, with the community becomes a thing, on ambitious and personal grounds, to be resisted and destroyed. You know how much it was a point to establish the Secretary of State, as the officer who was to administer the government in defect of the President and Vice-President. Here, I acknowledge, though I took far less part than was supposed, I ran counter to Mr. Jefferson's wishes; but if I had had no other reason for it, I had already experienced opposition from him, which rendered it a measure of self-defence. It is possible, too, (for men easily heat their imaginations when their passions are heated,) that they have by degrees persuaded themselves of what they may have at first only sported to influence others, namely, that there is some dreadful combination against State government and re-

publicanism; which, according to them, are convertible terms. But there is so much absurdity in this supposition, that the admission of it tends to apologize for their hearts at the expense of their heads. Under the influence of all these circumstances the attachment to the government of the United States, originally weak in Mr. Jefferson's mind, has given way to something very like dislike in Mr. Madison's. It is so counteracted by personal feelings as to be more an affair of the head than of the heart; more the result of a conviction of the necessity of Union than of cordiality to the thing itself. I hope it does not stand worse than this with him. In such a state of mind both these gentlemen are prepared to hazard a great deal to effect a change. Most of the important measures of every government are connected with the treasury. To subvert the present head of it, they deem it expedient to risk rendering the government itself odious; perhaps foolishly thinking that they can easily recover the lost affections and confidence of the people, and not appreciating, as they ought to do, the natural resistance to government, which in every community results from the human passions, the degree to which this is strengthened by the organized rivality of State governments, and the infinite danger that the national government, once rendered odious, will be kept so by these powerful and indefatigable enemies. They forget an old, but a very just, though a coarse saying, that it is much easier to raise the devil than to lay him. Poor Knox has come in for a share of their persecutions, as a man who generally thinks with me, and who has a portion of the President's good-will and confidence. In giving you this picture of political parties, my design is, I confess, to awaken your attention, if it has not yet been awakened, to the conduct of the gentlemen in question. If my opinion of them is founded, it is certainly of great moment to the public weal that they should be understood. I rely on the strength of your mind to appreciate men as they merit, when you have a clue to their real views.

A word on another point. I am told that serious apprehensions are disseminated in your State as to the existence of a monarchical party meditating the destruction of State and republican government. If it is possible that so absurd an idea can gain ground, it is necessary that it should be combated. I assure you, on my private faith and honor as a man, that there is not, in my judgment, a shadow of foundation for it. A very small number of men indeed may entertain theories less republican than Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, but I am persuaded there is not a man among them who would not regard as both criminal and visionary any attempt to subvert the republican system of the country. Most of these men rather fear that it may not justify itself by its fruits, than feel a predilection for a different form; and their fears are not diminished by the factious and fanatical politics which they find prevailing among a certain set of gentlemen and threatening to disturb the tranquillity and order of the government.

As to the destruction of State governments, the great and real anxiety is to be able to preserve the national from the too potent and counteracting influence of those governments. As to my own political creed, I give it to you with the utmost sincerity. I am affectionately attached to the republican theory. I desire above all things to see the equality of political rights, exclusive of all hereditary distinction, firmly established by a practical demonstration of its being consistent with the order and happiness of society. As to State governments, the prevailing bias of my judgment is that if they can be circumscribed within bounds, consistent with the preservation of the national government, they will prove useful and salutary. If the States were all of the size of Connecticut, Maryland, or New Jersey, I should decidedly regard the local governments as both safe and useful. As the thing now is, however, I acknowledge the most serious apprehensions, that the government of the United States will not be able to maintain itself against their influence. I see that influence already pene-

trating into the national councils and preventing their direction. Hence, a disposition on my part towards a liberal construction of the powers of the national government, and to erect every fence, to guard it from depredations, which is, in my opinion, consistent with constitutional propriety. As to any combination to prostrate the State governments, I disavow and deny it. From an apprehension lest the judiciary should not work efficiently or harmoniously, I have been desirous of seeing some national scheme of connection adopted as an amendment to the Constitution, otherwise I am for maintaining things as they are; though I doubt much the possibility of it, from a tendency in the nature of things towards the preponderancy of the State governments.

I said that I was affectionately attached to the republican theory. This is the real language of my heart, which I open to you in the sincerity of friendship; and I add that I have strong hopes of the success of that theory; but, in candor, I ought also to add that I am far from being without doubts. I consider its success as yet a problem. It is yet to be determined by experience whether it be consistent with that stability and order in government which are essential to public strength and private security and happiness.

On the whole, the only enemy which Republicanism has to fear in this country is in the spirit of faction and anarchy. If this will not permit the ends of government to be attained under it, if it engenders disorders in the community, all regular and orderly minds will wish for a change, and the demagogues who have produced the disorder will make it for their own aggrandizement. This is the old story. If I were disposed to promote monarchy and overthrow State governments, I would mount the hobby-horse of popularity; I would cry out "usurpation," "danger to liberty," etc., etc.; I would endeavor to prostrate the national government, raise a ferment, and then "ride in the whirlwind, and direct the storm." That there are men acting with Jefferson and Madison who have this in view, I verily believe; I could lay

my finger on some of them. That Madison does not mean it, I also verily believe; and I rather believe the same of Jefferson, but I read him upon the whole thus: "A man of profound ambition and violent passions."

You must be by this time tired of my epistle. Perhaps I have treated certain characters with too much severity. I have, however, not meant to do them injustice, and, from the bottom of my soul, believe I have drawn them truly; and it is of the utmost consequence to the public weal they should be viewed in their true colors. I yield to this impression. I will only add that I make no clandestine attacks on the gentlemen concerned. They are both apprised indirectly from myself of the opinion I entertain of their views. With the truest regard and esteem.*

TO GENERAL OTHO H. WILLIAMS.

PHILADELPHIA, June 9, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

I feel myself not a little a delinquent in regard to a certain paper you forwarded to me. I will now explain the reasons of its non-appearance. Though I thought it a merited and a very good reproof on certain folks, as well as calculated to throw useful light on transactions interesting to the fame of our deceased friend,† *as the business depending was taking a favorable turn* when I received your letter, I doubted the expediency of starting any new game, lest it should wound the pride and jar the nerves of more than the individual meant to be chastised, so as to perhaps do harm to a cause we both wish to promote.

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," iv., 520. This long, interesting, and most important letter was written at the time of the troubles in the Cabinet. It is evidently much more than merely a letter to a friend, and was undoubtedly written with a specific purpose, probably to explain through Carrington to the Virginian Federalists why the writer had parted company with Madison and had attacked Jefferson. It is the ablest and best exposition that we have of the condition of politics at that time; and, although written by a party leader, is singularly moderate in tone and is clearly intended to be fair to all.

† General Greene, of whom General Williams had written a defence.

If things had continued on an unpromising train, I should have been willing to have taken the chance of the publication. In me it would have gratified feelings of more than one kind.

I at first intended to reserve the publication for the conclusion of the business, but then I doubted whether it was worth while to stir again the question. It could not serve the original purpose, and it was not *necessary* to the fame of the General, that stands unassailable with *success*.

If any *impressions* have fallen under your notice which induce you to think this last conclusion erroneous, the publication at this time will not be too late for that purpose.

P. S.—With your permission, I will retain the paper as an interesting record of some particulars which were not before known to me.*

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

PHILADELPHIA, June 22, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

I accept your challenge to meet you in the field of mutual confidential communication; though I cannot always promise punctuality or copiousness. I will, however, do the best I can.

Will it not be a necessary preliminary to agree upon a cypher? One has been devised for me which, though simple in execution, is tedious in preparation. I may shortly forward it. In the meantime let us settle some appellations for certain official characters. I will call,

The President, Scævola.	The Vice-President, Brutus.
Sec'y of State, Scipio.	Sec'y of War, Sempronius.
Sec'y of Treasury, Paulus.	Attorney-General, Lysander.

SENATORS.

Robert Morris, Cato.	Oliver Ellsworth, Virginius.
Rufus King, Leonidas.	George Cabot, Portius.

* I owe this letter, now first printed from the original, to the kindness of Mr. Otho H. Williams, of Baltimore, the grandson of the Revolutionary soldier. The paper referred to is among the Hamilton MSS. in the State Department.

Aaron Burr, Sævius. Richard Henry Lee, Marcus.
—— Monroe, Sydney. Ralph Izard, Themistocles.

REPRESENTATIVES.

James Madison, Tarquin. —— Ames, Valerius.
Abraham Baldwin, Hampden. John Lawrence, Solon.
—— Mercer, Tacitus. —— Murray, Livy.
Thomas Fitzsimmons, Cicero. Egbert Benson, Cromwell.
Jeremiah Wadsworth, Titius. Jonathan Trumbull, Quintus.
—— Giles, Chronus.

You see that I have avoided characteristic names. In my next you shall have a sketch of the general state of the country, its politics and parties. I thank you for your calculations, as I will for every suggestion you shall make. I shall seldom fail to get either a new idea or a new appellation of an old one. I shall endeavor to put in train, by this opportunity, the papers you advise to be sent to the Russian Ambassador. If your courage is not put to the test by being put to wear what you have won, it will not be my fault. Do you know enough of the catechism in the vulgar tongue to fulfil what you have lately undertaken? *

TO COLONEL HETH † AND OTHERS.

PHILADELPHIA, June 26, 1792.

GENTLEMEN:

I have received your circular-letter of the 28th of February last.

I consider it as addressed to me in the capacity of a fellow-soldier, and in that capacity I now acknowledge and answer it.

Respect for you, gentlemen, and for those on whose behalf you write, does not permit me to be silent, and in replying, the frankness which is due to you and them, and which is not less due to my own character, forbids me to dissemble.

* Reprinted from Sparks's "Life of Gouverneur Morris," vol. i., p. 373.

† Colonel William Heth, of Virginia.

My judgment does not accord with the views which are announced in your letter. A perseverance in them will not, I believe, be productive of any advantage to the parties, and may, I fear, be attended with some public inconveniences, which I am persuaded they would regret.

I also have made sacrifices *with* the army, and, what is less known, *for* the army. I feel that I love those who remain of that respectable band, and that no one can be more solicitous than myself for their welfare. I trust, therefore, they will do justice to my motives on the present occasion.*

TO WILLIAM SETON.

(*Private.*)

June 26, 1792.

DEAR SIR:

This accompanies an official letter. I acknowledge I doubt the accuracy of the opinion of the attorney-general on the last point. A law is not to be so literally construed as to involve *absurdity* and *oppression*. The Legislature might *reasonably* restrain its officers from future *buying* and *selling* of stock, but could not reasonably prevent their making a disposition of property which they had previously acquired according to the laws of their country.

At the same time, for greater caution, I should in my own case follow the strict interpretation.

All my property in the funds is about $800, 3 per cents. These, at a certain period, I should have sold, had I not been unwilling to give occasion to cavil.

The restriction itself, as it respects the officers of the treasury, and I rather think the commissioners of loans, is a wise and unexceptionable one.

But the propriety of its further extension is not obvious,

* This letter refers to a claim made by the army for compensation for losses incurred by their having been paid in a depreciated currency. This movement had been made political in the South, and the foundation of attacks on the North for buying soldiers' claims, and also on Washington and Hamilton. A second circular was then issued reiterating the claim and asking the coöperation of all officers. This was the subject of Hamilton's letter.

and I doubt whether it will be lasting. The act passed in a prodigious hurry.

TO RUFUS KING.

PHILADELPHIA, June 28, 1792.

MY DEAR KING:

I have not, as you well may imagine, been inattentive to your political squabble. I believe you are right (though I have not accurately examined), but I am not without apprehension that a ferment may be raised which may not be allayed when you wish it. 'T is not to be forgotten that the opposers of Clinton are the real friends to order and good government, and that it will ill become them to give an example to the contrary.

Some folks are talking of conventions and the bayonet. But the case will justify neither a resort to such principles nor to violence. Some amendments of your election laws, and possibly the impeachment of some of the canvassers who have given proofs of *premeditated* partiality, will be very well, and it will answer good purposes to keep alive, within proper bounds, the public indignation. But beware of extremes!

There appears to be no *definite declared* objects of the movements on foot, which render them more ticklish. What *can* you do? What do you *expect* to effect? *

TO ELIAS BOUDINOT.

PHILADELPHIA, July 12, 1792.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote you, a day or two since, on the subject of the advertisement.

You recollect there is a power to borrow to be given to the committee, under the seal of the corporation. No time ought to be lost in preparing and executing the power and making application for the loan. Not more than $30,000, in

* Now first printed from the King papers in the possession of Dr. Charles King. In R. King's handwriting on the opposite page is the following: "I have had no agency in promoting the measures adopted respecting the decision of the canvassers. I have, however, felt the utmost indignation."

addition to the $10,000 already borrowed, need at first be asked for. I shall write to Mr. Seton by to-morrow's post.

Pray, my friend, let nothing slumber.

TO WASHINGTON.

SIR: PHILADELPHIA, July 22, 1792.

I wrote you on Monday last, transmitting a resolution of the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund. Nothing in the way of public business requiring your attention has since occurred.

There is a matter I beg leave to mention to you confidentially, in which your interposition, if you deem it advisable, may have a good effect.

I have long had it at heart that some good system of regulations for the forwarding supplies to the army, issuing them there and accounting for them to the Department of War, should be established. On conversing with the Secretary at War, I do not find that any such now exists; nor have the intimations I have taken the liberty to give on the subject, though perfectly well received, hitherto produced the desired effect. The utility of the thing does not seem to be as strongly impressed on the mind of the Secretary at War as it is on mine.

It has occurred to me that if you should think fit to call by letter upon the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary at War to report to you the *system and regulations under which the procuring, issuing, and accounting for supplies to the army is conducted*, it would produce what appears to be now wanting. I submit the idea accordingly.

TO RUFUS KING.

MY DEAR SIR: PHILADELPHIA, July 25, 1792.

I received, lately, a letter from you, in which you expressed sentiments according with my own on the present complexion of your party politics, as, if a letter of mine to

you did not miscarry, you will have seen. I wished that Clinton and his party should be placed in a just light before the people, and that a spirit of dissatisfaction, within proper bounds, should be kept alive; and this for national purposes, as well as from a detestation of their principles and conduct.

But a resort to first principles, in any shape, is decidedly against my judgment. I don't think the occasion will, in any sense, warrant it. It is not for the friends of good government to employ extraordinary expedients, which ought only to be resorted to in cases of great magnitude and urgent necessity. I reject as well the idea of a convention as of force.

To rejudge the decision of the canvassers by a convention, has to me too much the appearance of reversing the sentence of a court by a legislative decree. The canvassers had a final authority in all the forms of the Constitution and laws. A question arose in the execution of their office, not absolutely free from difficulty, which they have decided (I am persuaded wrongly), but within the power vested in them. I do not feel it right or expedient to attempt to reverse the decision by any means not known to the Constitution or laws.

The precedent may suit us to-day; but to-morrow we may see its abuse.

I am not even sure that it will suit us at all. I see already publications aiming at a revision of the Constitution, with a view to alterations which would spoil it. It would not be astonishing, if a convention should be called, if it should produce more than is intended. Such weapons are not to be played with. Even the friends of good government, in their present mood, may fancy alterations desirable which would be the reverse.

Men's minds are too much unsettled everywhere at the present juncture. Let us endeavor to settle them, and not to set them more afloat. I find that strong-minded men here view the matter in the same light with me, and that even Mr. Jay's character is likely in a degree, to suffer by

the idea that he fans the flame a little more than is quite prudent. I wish this idea to be conveyed to him with proper *management.* I have thoughts of writing to him.

You see, out of the reach of the contagion, I am very cool and reasonable. If I were with you I should probably not escape the infection.

Francis Childs* is a very cunning fellow. In Philadelphia, in the person of his proxy, Freneau, he is a good Antifederalist and Clintonian; in New York he is a good Federalist and Jayite. Beckley and Jefferson pay him for the first, and the Federal citizens of New York for the last. Observe a paragraph in his *Daily Advertiser* of the 18th instant. These things ought, in a proper way, to be brought into view.

TO COLONEL EDWARD CARRINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 25, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received and thank you for your two letters of the 11th instant.

When I asked your opinion concerning the most fit position for a branch of the bank, I had no idea that the question would have been decided with so much precipitaiton as has happened. After some loose conversation with individual directors, in which the comparative merits of different places were slightly discussed, and left, as I understood, for further information, I was surprised with an intimation that the place had been decided upon, that Richmond was that place, and that some day in August had been assigned for choosing directors. A predominating motive, though an insufficient one, appears to have been that most of the bank-stock held in Virginia is held by persons in and about Richmond.

The reasons assigned in your letter in favor of another place are prodigiously weighty. Without committing you,

* Editor of the *New York Daily Advertiser*, and proprietor, with Freneau, of the *National Gazette.*

they shall be made known before the thing is finally finished. But I suspect it has gone too far.

Your observations concerning the temper of the people of your State are, as far as they go, consoling. Reflections according with them had arisen in my mind, though I could not be sure that I might not overrate circumstances. I shall wait with expectation for the further communication which you are so obliging as to promise.

What you remark concerning the non-execution of the excise law in North Carolina is very interesting. The probable effect of a continuance of the affair in the same posture is obvious. It has been the wish to win the object from time and reflection. But this can no longer be relied upon. The thing must be brought to an issue, and will be, as soon as the new arrangement respecting compensations is completed. If process should be violently resisted in the parts of North Carolina bordering on your State, how much could be hoped from the aid of the militia of your State?*

TO RUFUS KING.

July 27, 1792.

Desirous of examining accurately the question decided by the canvassers, I will thank you for a minute of all the authorities which were consulted by you when you gave your opinion.†

I shall be glad to have them as soon as convenient.

* This letter is now first printed from the original in the possession of the same gentleman to whom I wrote another letter already given on page 34, and whose name I am unfortunately prevented from giving, as I have explained in a note on page 35.

† This letter, and those which precede, refer to one of the earliest and worst of our election frauds. Burr wished to run against Clinton, but was baffled by Hamilton, the result being Jay was nominated, and, after a most heated canvass, elected. His election depended, however, on the votes of three counties, and the Clintonian board of canvassers threw out, on the most technical and flimsy grounds, the votes of these counties and burned them. There was great wrath and excitement over this "count out," as it would now be called, and a convention and other violent measures were proposed, which Hamilton resisted. The Legislature, by a party vote, sustained the canvassers, and declared Clinton elected by a majority of 108 votes.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, July 30, 1792.

SIR:

I received the most sincere pleasure at finding in our late conversation, that there was some relaxation in the disposition you had before discovered to decline a re-election. Since your departure, I have left no opportunity of sounding the opinions of persons, whose opinions were worth knowing on these two points. 1st. The effect of your declining, upon the public affairs, and upon your own reputation. 2dly. The effect of your continuing, in reference to the declarations you have made of your disinclination to public life; and I can truly say that I have not found the least difference of sentiment on either point. The impression is uniform, that your declining would be to be deplored as the greatest evil that could befall the country at the present juncture, and as critically hazardous to your own reputation; that your continuance will be justified in the mind of every friend to his country, by the evident necessity for it. 'T is clear, says every one with whom I have conversed, that the affairs of the national government are not yet firmly established—that its enemies, generally speaking, are as inveterate as ever—that their enmity has been sharpened by its success, and by all the resentments which flow from disappointed predictions and mortified vanity—that a general and strenuous effort is making in every State to place the administration of it in the hands of its enemies, as if they were its safest guardians—that the period of the next House of Representatives is likely to prove the crisis of its permanent character—that if you continue in office nothing materially mischievous is to be apprehended, if you quit, much is to be dreaded—that the same motives which induced you to accept originally ought to decide you to continue till matters have assumed a more determined aspect—that indeed it would have been better, as it regards your own character, that you had never consented to come forward, than now to leave the business unfinished and in danger of being

undone—that in the event of storms arising, there would be an imputation either of want of foresight or want of firmness—and, in fine, that on public and personal accounts, on patriotic and prudential considerations, the clear path to be pursued by you will be, again to obey the voice of your country, which, it is not doubted, will be as earnest and as unanimous as ever.

On this last point, I have some suspicion that it will be insinuated to you, and perhaps (God forgive me if I judge hardly) with design to place before you a motive for declining—that there is danger of a division among the electors, and of less unanimity in their suffrages than heretofore. My view of this matter is as follows:

While your first election was depending, I had no doubt that there would be characters among the electors, who, if they durst follow their inclinations, would have voted against you; but that in all probability they would be restrained by an apprehension of public resentment—that nevertheless it was possible a few straggling votes might be found in opposition, from some headstrong and fanatical individuals—that a circumstance of this kind would be in fact, and ought to be estimated by you, as of no importance, since there would be sufficient unanimity to witness the general confidence and attachment towards you.

My view of the future accords exactly with what was my view of the past. I believe the same motives will operate to produce the same result. The dread of public indignation will be likely to restrain the indisposed few. If they can calculate at all, they will naturally reflect that they could not give a severer blow to their cause than by giving a proof of their hostility to you. But if a solitary vote or two should appear wanting to perfect unanimity, of what moment can it be? Will not the fewness of the exceptions be a confirmation of the devotion of the community to a character which has so generally united its suffrages after an administration of four years at the head of a new government, opposed in its first establishment by a large propor-

tion of its citizens, and obliged to run counter to many prejudices in devising the arduous arrangements requisite to public credit and public order? Will not those who may be the authors of any such exceptions, manifest more their own perverseness and malevolence than any diminution of the affection and confidence of the nation? I am persuaded that both these questions ought to be answered in the affirmative, and that there is nothing to be looked for, on the score of diversity of sentiment, which ought to weigh for a moment.

I trust, sir, and I pray God, that you will determine to make a further sacrifice of your tranquillity and happiness to the public good. I trust that it need not continue above a year or two more; and I think that it will be more eligible to retire from office before the expiration of a term of election, than to decline a re-election.

The sentiments I have delivered upon this occasion, I can truly say, proceed exclusively from an anxious concern for the public welfare, and an affectionate personal attachment. These dispositions must continue to govern in every vicissitude one who has the honor to be, very truly and respectfully, etc.

August 3d. Since writing the foregoing, I am favored with your interesting letter of the 29th of July. An answer to the points raised is not difficult, and shall as soon as possible be forwarded.

TO WASHINGTON.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Aug. 10, 1792.

SIR:

I have been duly honored with your letters of the 1st and 5th instant. A copy of the letter is inclosed according to your desire.

You may depend upon it, sir, that nothing shall be wanting in this department to furnish all requisite supplies for the army with efficiency and economy, and to bring to exact

account all persons concerned in them as far as shall consist with the powers of the department. Hitherto moneys have been furnished to the War Department as they have been called for, for procuring all those articles which have not been objects of direct contract with the Treasury. And I learn from the Secretary of War that every thing is in great maturity,

Under the former system, provisions and clothing were the only articles which the Treasury had the charge of procuring; the receiving, issuing, and inspecting their quality belonged to the Department of War by usage.

The act of the last session, entitled "An act making alterations in the Treasury and War Departments," prescribes that all purchases and contracts for all supplies for the use of the Department of War, be made *by* or *under the direction of* the Treasury Department.

As much progress has been made in the preparation for the campaign, prior to the passing of this act, by the Secretary of War, I thought it best to continue the business under his immediate care for some time—till in fact all the arrangements begun should be completed. It is now, however, determined that on the first of September the business of procuring all supplies will be begun under the immediate direction of the Treasury, upon estimates and requisitions from time to time furnished and made by the Department of War.

The arrangement which is contemplated for this purpose is the following:—Provisions and clothing will be provided as heretofore, by contracts made by the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to previous advertisements. Articles in the quartermaster's department will be to be procured by him, or his agents or deputies; for which purpose, advances of money will be made to him directly, to be accounted for to the Treasury by him. Ordnance stores, Indian goods, and all contingent supplies, will be procured by an agent who will be constituted for the purpose, with an allowance of eight hundred dollars a year in lieu of commission.

Accounts for his purchases, in every case in which it can conveniently be done (which will comprehend the greatest number of cases), will be settled immediately with the Treasury, and the money paid directly to the individuals. In other cases, advances on account will be made to the agent, to be accounted for directly to the Treasury.

A leading object of this arrangement is to exempt the officers, both of the War and Treasury Departments, from the ill-natured suspicions which are incident to the actual handling and disbursements of public money. None of the inferior officers of either department, except the Treasurer, will have any concern with it.

The supplies of every kind will be delivered to the order of the Department of War. The issuing of them and the accounting for the issues (except as to provisions, which are directly issued by the contractors to the troops, and which are proved to the Treasury upon vouchers prescribed for the purpose) appertain to the Department of War. The regulations which have been adopted for the purpose, will no doubt be eagerly reported to you by the Secretary of War, as well as those which have been concerted with the Treasury respecting the paying and accounting for the pay of the troops.

I beg leave to assure you, that, in the application of the general arrangement which you have adopted respecting the execution of the act concerning distilled spirits, the greatest attention will be paid to economy, as far as the precautions of the Treasury can insure it.

I presume it to have been your intention that the opinion of the Attorney-General should be taken as to the power of the President to appoint the supplementary officers contemplated during the recess of the Senate; which shall accordingly be done.

It affords me much satisfaction to observe that your mind has anticipated the decision to enforce the law, in case a refractory spirit should continue to render the ordinary and more desirable means ineffectual. My most deliberate

reflections have led me to conclude, that the time for acting with decision is at hand; and it is with pleasure I can add, that an increasing acquiescence is likely to render this course the less difficult in the cases in which an uncomplying temper may finally prevail.

I shall without delay execute your directions respecting the officers of the cutters.

TO ELIAS BOUDINOT.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 13, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

Some skirmishing having begun in the *Gazette of the United States* respecting Mr. Freneau's receiving a salary from government, I mentioned in conversation with a friend all that I knew of the matter, and among other things, but without naming you, the information you had given me concerning Mr. Madison's negotiation with Freneau. Upon this he founded a very pointed attack upon Mr. Freneau and Mr. Jefferson, which I dare say you have seen, as also Mr. Freneau's affidavit denying all negotiation with "Thomas Jefferson, Esq., Secretary of State," etc., etc. The gentleman has since applied to me to obtain, if possible, an authentication of the fact of the negotiation.

If I recollect right, you told me that this, if necessary, could be done; and, if practicable, it is of real importance that it should be done. It will confound and put down a man who is continually machinating against the public happiness.

You will oblige me in the most particular manner by obtaining and forwarding to me without delay the particulars of all the steps taken by Mr. Madison—the when and where—and with liberty to use the name of the informant. His affidavit to the facts, if obtainable, would be of infinite value. Care ought to be taken that nothing is asserted which is not unquestionable.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 16, 1792.

DEAR SIR:

I have been duly favored with your letter of the 4th inst. A warrant for one thousand dollars in your favor has issued. If any authorization from you had been sent to your son or any one else, your signature on the warrant would have been unnecessary. But as it is, it will be indispensable. Perhaps, however, the Treasurer may pay in expectation of it.

The question when the Vice-President entered on the duties of his office is open at the Treasury, though an opinion has obtained that the taking of the oath was the criterion. This has been founded on two considerations—analogy to the case of the President. The Constitution requires that he shall take an oath *before* he enters upon the *execution* of his office. He cannot enter upon the duties of it without entering upon the execution of it, and he cannot legally do the latter till he has taken the oath prescribed. The same injunction, however, is not laid upon the Vice-President, and therefore, except by analogy, resort must be had to the second consideration, namely, that the taking of the oath of office is the legal act of acceptance and may be supposed to date the commencement of service.

But this reasoning, it must be confessed, is not conclusive, and therefore the opinion of the Attorney-General will be taken, both as to the President and Vice-President, and I presume will guide in the adjustment.

Twenty thousand dollars have been appropriated, and the advances by anticipation may reach that limit.

You forgot that Mr. Clinton could feast upon what would starve another. He will not, however, have an opportunity of making the experiment, and I hope the starvation policy will not long continue fashionable.

Your confirmation of the good disposition of New England is a source of satisfaction. I have a letter from a well-informed friend in Virginia who says: "All the persons I

converse with are prosperous and happy, and yet most of them, including the friends of the government, appear to be much alarmed at a supposed system of policy tending to subvert the republican government of the country." Were ever men more ingenious to torment themselves with phantoms?

TO WILLIAM SETON.

August 17, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter mentioning certain particulars respecting the two banks has been received and will be duly attended to. I trust, however, that certain appearances have in no degree proceeded from any unkind disposition. The solution, I believe, is to be found in the necessity of sending here a considerable sum in specie. Large payments into the Bank of North America on account of the State of Pennsylvania, subscriptions to canals, etc., and large calls upon the Bank of the United States for the service of government, joined to liberal discounts, had produced a considerable balance in favor of the Bank of North America, which rendered it expedient to draw a sum of specie from New York, not to leave the National Bank in any degree in the power of the Bank of North America, which once manifested a very mischievous disposition, that was afterwards repaid by acts of kindness and generosity. The tide is now changing and must speedily reverse the balance, and I mention it in confidence, because I wish by explaining to cherish the confidence between the two institutions at New York so necessary to their mutual interest.

Inclosed, my dear sir, is a letter to Mr. Donald, of St. Vincents, which I beg your most particular care in forwarding. I presume he is a merchant there, but a gentleman lately mentioned to me that he thought the name of the Governor of St. Vincents was Donald. If so, he is probably the person intended. I received a letter from him giving me some information of my father. The let-

ter to Mr. Donald covers one to my father, who, from a series of misfortunes, was reduced to great distress. You will perceive from this that I must be anxious for the safe conveyance of my letter. If there is any person of whom you can make previous inquiry concerning Mr. Donald, you will oblige me by doing it as a guide in forwarding the letter. I mean to send a duplicate from this place.

TO JOHN JAY.

(*Private.*)

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 3, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

The proceedings at Pittsburgh which you will find stated in the inclosed papers and other incidents in the western parts of this State announce so determined and persevering a spirit of opposition to the laws, as in my opinion to render a vigorous exertion of the powers of government indispensable. I have communicated this opinion to the President, and I doubt not his impressions will accord with it. In this case, one point for consideration will be the expediency of the next Circuit Court's noticing the state of things in that quarter, particularly the meeting at Pittsburgh and its proceedings. You will observe an avowed object is to "*obstruct the operation* of the law." This is attempted to be qualified by a pretence of doing it by "every legal measure." But "legal measures" to "obstruct the operation of a law" is a contradiction in terms. I therefore entertain no doubt that a high misdemeanor has been committed. The point, however, is under submission to the Attorney-General for his opinion.

There is really, my dear sir, a crisis in the affairs of the country which demands the most mature consideration of its best and wisest friends.

I beg you to apply your own most serious thoughts to it, and favor me as soon as possible with the result of your reflections. Perhaps it will not be amiss for you to converse

with Mr. King. His judgment is sound—he has caution and energy.

Would a proclamation from the President be advisable, stating the criminality of such proceedings, and warning all persons to abstain from them as the laws will be strictly enforced against all offenders?

If the plot should thicken and the application of force should appear to be unavoidable, will it be expedient for the President to repair in person to the scene of commotion?

These are some of the questions which present themselves. The subject will doubtless open itself in all its aspects to you.

TO ———.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 21, 1792.

DEAR SIR:

I take the liberty to inclose you the copy of a letter from a very respectable friend in New York. The contents surprised me—nor am I quite persuaded that the appearance of Mr. Burr on the stage is not a diversion in favor of Mr. Clinton.*

Mr. Clinton's success I should think very unfortunate; I am not for trusting the government too much in the hands of its enemies. But still Mr. C. is a man of property, and in private life, as far as I know, of probity. I fear the other gentleman is unprincipled, both as a public and a private man. When the Constitution was in deliberation, his conduct was equivocal; but its enemies, who, I believe, best understood him, considered him as with them. In fact, I take it, he is for or against nothing, but as it suits his interest or ambition. He is determined, as I conceive, to make his way to be the head of the popular party, and to climb *per fas aut nefas* to the highest honors of the State, and as much higher as circumstances may permit. Embar-

* This refers to the contest for the Vice-Presidency at the second national election. The struggle finally settled down to Clinton and Adams, and the latter was elected.

rassed, as I understand, in his circumstances, with an extravagant family, bold, enterprising, and intriguing, I am mistaken if it be not his object to play the game of confusion, and I feel it to be a religious duty to oppose his career.

I have hitherto scrupulously refrained from interference in elections; but the occasion is, in my opinion, of sufficient importance to warrant in this instance a departure from that rule. I therefore commit my opinion to you without scruple; but in perfect confidence. I pledge my character for discernment, that it is incumbent upon every good man to resist the present design.

TO RUFUS KING.

September 23, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

Though I had had a previous intimation of the possibility of such an event, yet the intelligence contained in your letter of the 17th surprised me. Even now I am to be convinced that the movement is any thing more than a diversion in favor of Mr. Clinton; yet, on my part, it will not be neglected. My attention, as far as shall be in any degree safe, will be directed to every State south of New York. I do not go beyond it, because other influences would be quite as efficacious there as mine.

A good use will be made of it in this State. I wish a letter could be written here, stating the plan, and Mr. Dallas' assertion respecting Pennsylvania, which could be made use of without reserve. You well know who could write such a letter, and of course to whom it might be addressed. Mr. Lewis would be the most proper person to be written to. This is a matter of importance, and if practicable no time should be lost.

I wrote Mr. Jay a long letter, which I fear reached New York after he had set out on the circuit, informing him that I had concluded to advise a proclamation; and my reasons for it, which included some material facts not before com-

municated, I have not leisure to repeat. The proclamation has been signed by the President, and sent to Mr. Jefferson for his counter-signature; I expect it here on Tuesday, and have taken correspondent measures. I believe all is prudent and safe.

TO ———.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 26, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

Some days since I was surprised with the following intelligence in a letter from Mr. King, whose name I disclose to you in confidence.

"*Burr* is industrious in his canvass, and his object is well understood by our Antis. Mr. Edwards is to make interest for him in Connecticut, and Mr. Dallas, who is here, and quite in the circle of the Governor and the party, informs us that Mr. Burr will be supported as Vice-President in Pennsylvania. Nothing which has heretofore happened so decisively proves the inveteracy of the opposition. Should they succeed, much would be to be apprehended."

Though in my situation I deem it most proper to avoid interference in any matter relating to the elections for members of the government, yet I feel reasons of sufficient force to induce a departure from that rule in the present instance.

Mr. Burr's integrity as an individual is not unimpeached. As a public man, he is one of the worst sort—a friend to nothing but as it suits his interest and ambition. Determined to climb to the highest honors of the State, and as much higher as circumstances may permit, he cares nothing about the means of effecting his purpose. 'T is evident that he aims at putting himself at the head of what he calls the "popular party" as affording the best tools for an ambitious man to work with, secretly turning liberty into ridicule. He knows as well as most men how to make use of the name. In a word, if we have an embryo-Cæsar in the United States, 't is Burr.

TO GEN. C. C. PINCKNEY.*

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 10, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

I duly received your letter of the 6th September, and have sent an extract to Mr. Church for the explanation which is necessary. I feel myself truly obliged by your friendly allusion to my unpleasant situation, and for the consolation which you are so kind as to offer me. The esteem of discerning and virtuous men must always support a mind properly formed under the pressure of malevolence and envy. I will not pretend that I am insensible to the persecution which I experience; but it may be relied upon that I shall desert no post which I ought to endeavor to maintain, so long as my own reputation or the public good may render perseverance necessary or proper. When it is not requisite, either to the one or the other, my friends will excuse me if I recollect that I have a growing and hitherto too much neglected family. It is to be lamented that so strong a spirit of faction and innovation prevails at the present moment in a great part of the country. The thing is alarming enough to call for the attention of every friend to government. Let me not be thought to travel out of my sphere, if I observe that a particular attention to the election for the next Congress is dictated by the vigorous and general effort which is making by factious men to introduce everywhere, and in every department, persons unfriendly to the measures, if not the constitution, of the national government. Either Governor Clinton, or Mr. Burr, of New York, both decidedly of the description of persons I have mentioned, is to be run in this quarter as Vice-President, in opposition to Mr. Adams. The former has been invariably the enemy of national principles. The latter has no other principles than *to mount, at all events,* to the full honors of the State, and to as much more as circumstances will permit—a man in private life not unblemished. It will be a real misfortune to the government if either of

* General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, of South Carolina.

them should prevail. 'T is suspected by some that the plan is only to divide the votes of the Northern and the Middle States, to let in Mr. Jefferson by the votes of the South. I will not scruple to say to you, in confidence, that this also would be a serious misfortune to the government. That gentleman whom I once *very much esteemed*, but who does not permit me to retain that sentiment for him, is certainly a man of sublimated and paradoxical imagination, entertaining and propagating opinions inconsistent with dignified and orderly government. Mr. Adams, whatever objections may lie against some of his theoretic opinions, is a firm, honest, and independent politician. Some valuable characters are about to be lost to the House of Representatives of their own choice. I feared once that this would be the case with Mr. Smith,* of your State; but I believe his present intention is rather to continue to serve. I trust there can be no doubt of his success, and I wish means to be used to determine his acquiescence. He is truly an excellent member—a ready, clear speaker, of a sound analytic head, and the justest views. I know no man whose loss from the House would be more severely felt by the good cause. The delicacy of these observations from me will, of course, occur to you; I make them without reserve, confiding equally in your friendship and prudence. Accept the assurances of the cordial esteem and regard with which I have the honor to remain.

TO JOHN STEELE.†

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 15, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

The letter which you did me the favor to write me, of the 19th of September, came to hand two days ago. The late symptoms of acquiescence in the duty on distilled spirits, which you announce in your quarter, are particularly satisfactory. If the people will but make trial of the thing, their

* Hon. Wm. Smith, South Carolina.

† Member of Congress from North Carolina, 1790 to 1793.

good-will towards it will increase. This has hitherto happened everywhere, where the law has gone into operation. There certainly can be no tax more eligible or less burthensome. Though I impose on myself great circumspection on the subject of elections for the federal government, yet, in relation to the characters you mention, I feel myself more at liberty, and my entire confidence in you will not permit me to affect reserve. I take it for granted that in all the Northern and Middle States, the present President will have a unanimous vote. I trust it will be so in the South also. A want of unanimity would be a blot on our political hemisphere, and would wound the mind of that excellent character to whom the country is so much indebted. For Vice-President, Mr. Adams will have a nearly unanimous vote in the Eastern States. The same thing would happen in New York if the electors were to be chosen by the people; but as they will be chosen by the Legislature, and as a majority of the existing Assembly are Clintonians, the electors will, I fear, be of the same complexion. In Jersey, Mr. Adams will have a unanimous vote, and, according to present appearances, in Pennsylvania likewise. The parties have had a trial of their strength here for representatives, and though the issue is not finally ascertained, there is a moral certainty, from the returns received, that the ticket supported by the federal interest will prevail by a large majority. The electors *nominated* by the same interest will all, or nearly all, favor Mr. Adams. I believe the weight of Delaware will be thrown into the same scale. And I think it probable there will be votes for Mr. Adams in Maryland. I presume none in Virginia or Georgia. Of North Carolina, you can best judge. In South Carolina he will have votes, but I am at a loss to judge of the proportion.

This statement will inform you that Mr. Adams is the man who will be supported in the Northern and Middle States, by the friends of the Government. They reason thus: "Mr. Adams, like other men, has his faults and foibles; some of the opinions he is supposed to entertain,

we do not approve, but we believe him to be honest, firm, faithful, and independent—a sincere lover of his country—a real friend to genuine liberty, but combining his attachment to that with love of order and stable government. No man's private character can be fairer than his. No man has given stronger proofs than he of disinterested and intrepid patriotism. We will therefore support him as far preferable to any one who is likely to be opposed to him."

Who will be seriously opposed to him, I am yet at a loss to decide. One while, Governor Clinton appeared to be the man. Of late, there have been symptoms of Col. Burr's canvassing for it. Some say one or both of these will be played off as a diversion in favor of Mr. Jefferson. I do not scruple to say to you that my preference of Mr. Adams to either of these is decided. As to Mr. Clinton, he is a man of narrow and perverse politics, and as well under the former as under the present government, he has been steadily, since the termination of the war with Great Britain, opposed to national principles. My opinion of Mr. Burr is yet to form—but, according to the present state of it, he is a man whose only political principle is to *mount at all events*, to the highest legal honors of the nation, and as much further as circumstances will carry him. Imputations not favorable to his integrity as a man rest upon him, but I do not vouch for their authenticity.

There was a time when I should have balanced between Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Adams; but I now view the former as a man of sublimated and paradoxical imagination—cherishing notions incompatible with regular and firm government.

Thus have I opened myself to you with frankness; I doubt not I am perfectly safe in doing it.

You give me pain by telling me that you have declined serving in the House of Representatives after the third of March next, and that it is doubtful whether you will attend the next session. I anxiously hope that you will find it convenient to attend, and that you will change your resolution

as to not serving in a future House. The ensuing session will be an interesting one, and the next Congress will either anchor the government in safety or set it afloat.

My apprehension is excited when I see so many valuable members dropping off. Mr. Lawrence * and Mr. Benson † will not serve again. Mr. Barnwell ‡ also declines. The House will, I fear, lose more of its talents than it can spare.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

October, 1792.

I trust you are sufficiently convinced of my respect for you and attachment to you to render an apology for the liberty I am going to take, unnecessary. I learn with pain that you may not probably be here till late in the session. I fear that this will give some handle to your enemies to misrepresent, and though I am persuaded you are very indifferent personally to the event of a certain election, yet I hope you are not so as regards the cause of good government. The difference in that view is, in my conception, immense between the success of Mr. Clinton or yourself, and some sacrifices of feeling are to be made. But this is not the only relation in which I deem your early presence here desirable. Permit me to say it best suits the firmness and elevation of your character to meet all events, whether auspicious or otherwise, on the ground where station and duty call you. One would not give the ill-disposed the triumph of supposing that an anticipation of want of success has kept you from your post.

You observe, my dear sir, I speak without much *ménagement*. You will ascribe it to my confidence and esteem. It

* John Lawrence, an Englishman by birth and a soldier in the Revolution, was an eminent lawyer of New York, at this time a member of Congress, and afterwards U. S. District Judge and Senator from New York.

† Egbert Benson, at this time a member of Congress from New York, and again in 1813. Attorney-General of New York, 1780–1789, and from 1794 to 1801 a Judge of the Supreme Court of the State.

‡ Robert Barnwell, member of Congress from South Carolina from 1791 to 1793.

is not necessary in any view to multiply words. I forbear it; but allow me to add that it is the universal wish of your friends you should be as soon as possible at Philadelphia.*

TO JOHN JAY.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 18, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your favors of the 26th of November and 16th inst. have duly come to hand. I am ashamed that the former has remained so long unacknowledged, though I am persuaded my friends would readily excuse my delinquencies could they appreciate my situation. 'T is not the load of proper official business that alone engrosses me, though this would be enough to occupy any man. 'T is not the extra attention I am obliged to pay to the course of legislative manœuvres that alone adds to my burden and perplexity. 'T is the malicious intrigues to stab me in the dark, against which I am too often obliged to guard myself, that distract and harass me to a point which, rendering my situation scarcely tolerable, interferes with objects to which friendship and inclination would prompt me.

I have not, however, been unmindful of the subject of your letters. Mr. King will tell you the state the business was in. Nothing material has happened since. The representation will probably produce some effect, though not as great as ought to be expected. Some changes for the better, I trust, will take place.

The success of the Vice-President is as great a source of satisfaction as that of Mr. Clinton would have been of mortification and pain to me. Willingly, however, would I relinquish my share of the command to the Anti-federalists if I thought they were to be trusted. But I have so many proofs of the contrary, as to make me dread the experiment of their preponderance.†

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," v., 92.

† Reprinted from "Life of Jay," ii., 213.

TO RICHARD HARRISON.*

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 5, 1793.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Le Roy has not yet appeared with the powers and receipts mentioned in your letter of the 31st December. Every practicable facility will be given to the business when it comes forward. But I believe, according to the course of the Treasury, a certificate, not money, will be given for the balance. Your account is returned with directory remarks upon it. I am sorry you should have the trouble of so many different applications, but the course of public business requires it.

I am more sorry that we have been deprived of the pleasure of seeing you. Every friend I see from a place I love is a cordial to me, and I stand in need of something of that kind now and then.

The triumphs of vice are no new thing under the sun, and I fear, till the millennium comes, in spite of all our boasted light and purification, hypocrisy and treachery will continue to be the most successful commodities in the political market. It seems to be the destined lot of nations to mistake their foes for their friends, their flatterers for their faithful servants.

TO WILLIAM SHORT.†

(*Private.*)

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 5, 1793.

SIR:

The spirit of party has grown to maturity sooner in this country than perhaps was to have been counted upon. You will see a specimen of it in the inclosed speech of Mr.

* Richard Harrison was born in 1750. He was our Consul at Cadiz for five years, and this letter seems to have been written at the time of his return from his consulship and on the presentation of his accounts. In this year, 1793, he was appointed Auditor of the Treasury, a position which he held until his death, in 1841.

† William Short, of Virginia, was Minister to the Hague and in charge of our financial negotiations in Holland, and was afterwards Minister to Spain.

Giles, a member from Virginia. The House of Representatives adopted the resolutions proposed by him, *nemine contradicente*. The object, with a majority, was to confound the attempt by giving a free course to investigation.

I send you, also, a printed copy of a letter from me to the House of Representatives, of yesterday's date, being the first part of an answer to those resolutions. The statements referred to in it could not yet be printed, but lest the thing should pass the Atlantic and be made an ill use of to the prejudice of our country, I send you the antidote, to be employed or not, as you may see occasion.

An investigation intended to prejudice me is begun with respect to the circumstances attending the last payment on account of the French debt, which, in its progress, may draw your conduct into question. I think, however, you need be under no anxiety for the result. Your hesitations, at a certain stage, were so natural, and your reasons so weighty for them, that they will give little handle against you, besides the coincidence in opinion here about the expediency of a suspension of payment. The popular tide in this country is strong in favor of the last revolution in France; and there are many who go, of course, with that tide, and endeavor always to turn it to account. For my own part, I content myself with praying most sincerely that it may issue in the real advantage and happiness of the nation.

TO RUFUS KING.

PHILADELPHIA, April 2, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR:

When you are acquainted with all the facts, I think you will alter the opinion you appear to entertain. My application comes literally within your rule. The loan is necessary for the current expenditure, independent of any new advance to France, or of purchases of the debt. This has arisen from my having been under the necessity of remitting to Holland, for a payment in June of 1,000,000 guilders, as

an instalment of the principal, and 470,000 guilders for interest of the Dutch debt.

Late advices rendering it problematical whether a loan could be obtained for the purpose of the instalment, it became necessary to make this remittance to avoid danger to the public credit.

Hence, without a loan from the bank, I ought to calculate upon a deficiency in the present quarter (remember we are in April) of 672,023 dollars and 26 cents, and in the next, of 325,447 dollars and 28 cents.

This is the result of as accurate a view of receipts and expenditures as can now be taken. You will anticipate that, by all the expenditures not falling *actually* within the periods to which they are applicable, the real deficiency would not be so great as the calculated; but you will, at the same time, perceive that the view given supposes a state of the Treasury which renders an auxiliary indispensable.

At the same time, I cannot but think that you apply your principle too rigorously. I ought not to be forced *to divert for a length of time* funds appropriated for other purposes, *to the current* expenditure. To compel this would be, in substance to withhold the means necessary for the public service; for it would oblige the Treasury to employ an adventitious resource, which ought not be so employed, and *that too* at a time when it could be employed advantageously, according to its original and true destination. I therefore think, independent of the real exigency, the bank ought to make the loan.

The loans to government stand on very different considerations from those to individuals. Besides the chartered privileges, which are the grant of the government, the *vast deposits* constantly on hand, and which ordinarily exceed the loans from the bank, frequently very greatly, are an advantage which, generally speaking, bears no proportion to the advantages of the dealings between individuals and the bank. Consider, too, what has been the state of things for

some time past, and the real *sacrifices* which have been made not to distress the institution.

If for such accommodations equivalent services are not to be rendered, they could not easily be defended.

Besides, from the necessity of having a considerable sum on hand in the Treasury, and the natural course of the business, the bank is pretty sure of having always on deposit a large part of what it lends to the government. This does not exist in any thing like the same degree, in the case of individuals.

You seem to calculate that the past advances will not be replaced. On the contrary, it is my intention, pursuant to stipulation, to repay as fast as the funds come in applicable to it; and in the last quarter of the year I hope to make a considerable progress in the reimbursement; till then, it will not be practicable.

I do not know whether Mr. Kane stated to you the nature of my proposal. It was that the payments should be made in four equal monthly instalments—the first on the first of June—and that each instalment should be reimbursed in six months. The real advance of the bank will be very temporary indeed before greater sums will come into its vaults from the duties. In the last quarter of the present and the first quarter of the ensuing year, very large receipts may be expected.

You are sure that while I seek to put myself in a proper posture, I shall not fail to have a due regard to the safety of the institution.

It is much to be wished that I could be enabled to make some purchases, though this will not be the case with the loan in question, unless a loan shall also have been obtained in Europe.

A meeting of the commissioners has lately been called by Mr. Jefferson, out of the course heretofore practised, in which I have been pressed to declare *whether I had or had not funds applicable to purchases.* I answered so as to be safe. But you readily perceive the design of this movement. There is no doubt in my mind that the next session

will revive the attack with more system and earnestness—and it is surely not the interest of any body or any *thing* that a serious *handle* should be furnished.

On the whole, I am persuaded that the bank can do what I ask without real inconvenience to itself; and my situation is such that I shall be compelled to find an auxiliary.

All the cry here is for peace. How is it with you?

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 5, 1793.

SIR:

The ship *John Buckley* is just arrived here from Lisbon, which place she left on the 23d of February.

The Messrs. Walns, a respectable mercantile house here, have received a letter from Mr. John Buckley, a respectable merchant of Lisbon, after whom the ship is named, of which the following is an extract:

"By letters from France, by this day's post, we find that an embargo took place there the 2d instant on all English, Russian, and Dutch vessels, which is certainly the prelude of war." This letter is dated the 22d of February.

Messrs. Walns, in addition, inform ——, that on the 23d of February, the moment the ship was getting under way, Mr. Buckley came on board with a letter from Mr. Fenwick, of Bordeaux, informing him that war had been declared by France against England, Russia, and Holland. The foregoing particulars I have directly from the Walns.

The report in the city is that the war was declared on the 8th of February.

Combining this with the letter of Lord Grenville to Mr. Chauvelin, requiring his departure, and the king's message to the House of Commons, founded upon it—there seems to be no room for doubt of the existence of war.

P. S.—I this instant learn that there are English papers in town, by way of St. Vincent, which mention that on the 8th of February the late Queen of France was also put to death, after a trial and condemnation.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, April 8, 1793.

SIR:

The papers of to-day, which I take it for granted are forwarded to you, will inform you of the confirmation of the war between France, England, and Holland, and of such other leading particulars as are contained in the English papers brought by the packet.

The object of this letter is merely to apprise you that the whole current of *commercial intelligence*, which comes down to the 11th of February, indicates thus far an *unexceptionable* conduct on the part of the British Government towards the vessels of the United States.

The information is received here with very great satisfaction, as favorable to the continuance of peace, the desire of which may be said to be both universal and ardent.

P. S.—Lest the papers may not be regularly transmitted, I enclose the two of this morning.

TO JOHN JAY.

PHILADELPHIA, April 9, 1793.

DEAR SIR:

When we last conversed together on the subject, we were both of opinion that the minister expected from France should be received.

Subsequent circumstances have perhaps induced an additional embarrassment on this point, and render it advisable to reconsider the opinion generally, and to raise this further question, Whether he ought to be received absolutely or with qualifications. The king has been decapitated. Out of this will arise a regent, acknowledged and supported by the powers of Europe almost universally, in capacity to act, and who may himself send an ambassador to the United States. Should we in such case receive both? If we receive one from the republic and refuse the other, shall we stand on ground perfectly neutral? If we receive a minister from the republic, shall we be afterward at lib-

erty to say, We will not decide whether there is a government in France competent to demand from us the performance of the existing treaties? What the government of France shall be is the very point in dispute. Till that is decided, the applicability of the treaties is suspended. When that government is established, we shall consider whether such changes had been made as to render their continuance incompatible with the interest of the United States. If we shall not have concluded ourselves by any act, I am of opinion that we have at least a right to hold the thing suspended. Till the point in dispute is decided, I doubt whether we could *bona fide* dispute the ultimate obligation of the treaties. Will the unqualified reception of a minister conclude us? If it will, ought we so to conclude ourselves? Ought we not rather to refuse receiving, or to receive with qualifications; declaring that we receive the person as the representative of the government, in fact, of the French nation, reserving to ourselves the right to consider the applicability of the treaties to the actual situation of the parties? These are questions which require our utmost wisdom. I would give a great deal for a personal discussion with you. Imprudent things have already been done, which render it proportionally important that every succeeding step should be well considered.*

TO JOHN JAY.

PHILADELPHIA, April 9, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have already written you by this post. A further question occurs—Would not a proclamation prohibiting our citizens from taking commissions on either side be proper? Would it be well that it should include a declaration of neutrality? If you think the measure prudent, could you draught such a thing as you would deem proper? I wish much you could.†

* Reprinted from "Life of Jay," i., 298.

† Reprinted from "Life of Jay," i., 300.

TO RUFUS KING.

PHILADELPHIA, May 2, 1793.

The failures in England will be so seriously felt in this country as to involve a real crisis in our money concerns.

I anxiously wish you could be here to assist in the operations of the Bank of the United States. Never was there a time which required more the union of courage and prudence than the present and approaching juncture. You can imagine all that I could add on this subject. Is it possible for you to spend a month with us?

TO JEFFERSON.*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, May 3, 1793.

SIR:

I regret extremely that I did not receive your letter respecting Mr. Ternant's application till two o'clock yesterday, after a warrant had issued in his favor for the sum requested.

Agreeing entirely in opinion with you, that all applications from diplomatic characters, as well those relating to pecuniary matters as others, ought to be addressed to your department, I should have taken no step on the present occasion, had it not been put on the footing of a previous arrangement (as you will perceive by the copy of Mr. Ternant's note to me), and had I not myself carried along in my mind a general impression that the spirit of what had passed would comprise the advance requested in the particular case.

For greater caution, however, I thought it advisable to mention the matter to the President, which was followed (if I remember right, upon my own suggestion) by the conversation which I had with you.

You will remember that though your recollection at the

* This, and the other letters to Jefferson which follow, simply show the strained relations between Jefferson and Hamilton, and the widening of the breach which finally resulted in open enmity.

time of what had passed from you agreed with what had been the result of your subsequent examination, yet you expressed an opinion that in the special case (adhering as a general rule to the spirit of your late communication) it ought to be advisable to make the advance desired, as it would be well "*to part friends.*" And it was at my request, subsequent to this declaration, that you engaged to review your communications to Mr. Ternant.

Having told Mr. Ternant that the matter would be terminated the day succeeding his application—not having heard from you on that day—understanding it to be your opinion that, on the whole, it would be well to make the advance,—I waited on the President yesterday morning, stated what had passed between us, and obtained his consent for making the advance.

I am thus particular from a desire that you may see the ground upon which I have proceeded, as it would give me pain that you should consider what has been done as the infringement of a rule of official propriety. I assure you this was not my intention.

TO ———.*

May, 1793.

You ask me if the newspapers of Philadelphia give a true picture of the conduct of its citizens on the occasion of the arrival of Mr. Genet, and whether the great body of them are really as indiscreet as those papers represent them.

It gives me pleasure to be able to answer you in the negative. I can assure you upon the best evidence that, comparatively speaking, but a small proportion of them have had agency in the business.

Though the papers, on the morning of the day of Mr. Genet's arrival, announced his approach, and at —— o'clock ——, three guns were fired from the frigate as a signal to

* This letter is undated, but it must have been written at this time, as Genet reached Philadelphia May 16, 1793, and the letter relates to that event.

those who were disposed to go to meet him at Gray's ferry, as had been previously concerted and notified in the papers, and though we are *told* by some of the printers that all the outlets from the city were crowded with persons going out to meet Mr. Genet, the fact is that a very inconsiderable number indeed went out. It is seldom easy to speak with absolute certainty in such cases, but from all I could observe or have been able to learn, I believe the number would be stated high at a hundred persons.

In the evening of the same day, according to notice in an evening paper which came out earlier than usual for the purpose, a meeting was convened at the State House yard under the direction of the same persons who had projected the going out to Gray's. This meeting was also inconsiderable. From forty to one hundred persons give you the extremes of the numbers present, as reported by those who were at the meeting or in a situation to observe it.

Here a committee was appointed to prepare an address to Mr. Genet; and another meeting of the citizens was advertised for the ensuing evening at the same place, the object of which, it seems, was to consider and approve the address.

This last meeting is stated differently from three hundred to one thousand. An accurate observer, who was a by-stander and paid particular attention to the matter, assures me that there were between five and six hundred assembled. I rely upon this as about the truth.

The persons who were met approved the address which had been prepared, and, as you have seen, nominated a committee to present it, whom they accompanied to Mr. Genet's lodging at the City Tavern.

On their way to the City Tavern their number was, as you will imagine, considerably increased. A crowd will always draw a crowd, whatever be the purpose. Curiosity will supply the place of attachment to or interest in the object. What number may have been assembled in the vicinity of the City Tavern, it is impossible to say. The

evening being pretty far advanced, was alone an obstacle to judging.

But the true test was the meeting in the State House yard. 'T is there we are to look for the real partisans of the measure. And, according to this standard, it may be pronounced that not a tenth part of the city participated in it.

You ask who were its promoters. I answer, that with very few *exceptions* they were the same men who have been uniformly the enemies and the disturbers of the government of the United States. It will not be surprising if we see ere long a curious *combination* growing up to control its measures, with regard to foreign politics, at the expense of the peace of the country—perhaps at a still greater expense.

We too have our disorganizers. But I trust there is enough of virtue and good sense in the people of America to baffle every attempt against their prosperity, though masked under the specious garb of an extraordinary zeal for liberty. They practically, I doubt not, adopt this sacred maxim, that without government there is no true liberty.

I agree with you in the reflections you make on the tendency of public demonstrations of attachment to the cause of France. 'T is certainly not wise to expose ourselves to the jealousy and resentment of the rest of the world, by a fruitless display of zeal for that cause. It may do us much harm, and it can do France no good (unless indeed we are to embark in the war with her, which nobody is so hardy as to avow, though some secretly machinate it). It cannot be without danger and inconvenience to our interests to impress on the nations of Europe an idea that we are actuated by the *same spirit* which has for some time past fatally misguided the measures of those who conduct the affairs of France, and sullied a cause once glorious, and that might have been triumphant. The cause of France is compared with that of America during its late revolution. Would to Heaven that the comparison were just. Would to Heaven we could discern in the mirror of French affairs the same hu-

manity, the same decorum, the same gravity, the same order, the same dignity, the same solemnity, which distinguished the cause of the American Revolution. Clouds and darkness would not then rest upon the issue as they now do. I own I do not like the comparison. When I contemplate the horrid and systematic massacres of the 2d and 3d of September; when I observe that a Marat and a Robespierre, the notorious prompters of those bloody scenes, sit triumphantly in the convention and take a conspicuous part in its measures—that an attempt to bring the assassins to justice has been obliged to be abandoned; when I see an unfortunate prince, whose reign was a continued demonstration of the goodness and benevolence of his heart, of his attachment to the people of whom he was the monarch, who, though educated in the lap of despotism, had given repeated proofs that he was not the enemy of liberty, brought precipitately and ignominiously to the block without any substantial proof of guilt, as yet disclosed—without even an authentic exhibition of motives, in decent regard to the opinions of mankind; when I find the doctrines of atheism openly advanced in the convention, and heard with loud applause; when I see the sword of fanaticism extended to force a political creed upon citizens who were invited to submit to the arms of France as the harbingers of liberty; when I behold the hand of rapacity outstretched to prostrate and ravish the monuments of religious worship, erected by those citizens and their ancestors; when I perceive passion, tumult, and violence usurping those seats, where reason and cool deliberation ought to preside, I acknowledge that I am glad to believe there is no real resemblance between what was the cause of America and what is the cause of France—that the difference is no less great than that between liberty and licentiousness. I regret whatever has a tendency to compound them, and I feel anxious, as an American, that the ebullitions of inconsiderate men among us may not tend to involve our reputation in the issue.

TO RUFUS KING.

June 15, 1793.

DEAR SIR:

The ideas expressed in your letter of the 14th correspond with my view of the subject in general. I did not perceive that any process could be devised to detain the privateer, and concluded that the issue would be to leave her in military custody. Indeed, I believe this was rather the expectation with all, though it was thought advisable to make the experiment of a reference to the civil tribunal.

With regard to the Catharine, I also entertain the doubt you appear to have. In the case of the Grange, the surrender was brought about by a demand of Mr. Genet and his interposition. But it was in contemplation of employing the military in case of refusal.

Yet, since that time, a libel has been filed in the District Court in the case of another vessel alleged to have been captured within the limits of our jurisdiction. And both Mr. Lewis and Mr. Rawle, attorney of the District, hold that the District or Admiralty Court will take cognizance of this question. They argue that it would be a great *chasm* in the law that there should not be some competent judicial authority to do justice between parties in the case of an illegal seizure within our jurisdiction. That the Court of Admiralty has naturally cognizance of *tortious takings* on the high seas, and as she gives relief *in rem*, may cause a re-delivery. That though, as a general principle, a court of a *neutral nation* will not examine the question of prize or not prize between belligerent powers, yet this principle must except the case of the infraction of the jurisdiction of the neutral power itself. Quoad this fact, its courts will interpose and give relief.

This is their reasoning, and it has much force. The desire of the Executive is to have the point ascertained, and if possible to put the affair in this train. There may arise nice difficulties about the *fact*, and nice points about the extent of jurisdiction at sea, which the courts had best settle.

The contest in form must, as you say, be between the *owners* and the captors. For this purpose *Mr. Hammond* is to cause the proper instructions to be given.

There is a letter from *me* to *Harrison.** If Troup has not opened it, let him do it.

TO GEN. OTHO H. WILLIAMS.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

PHILADELPHIA, June 21, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR:

I learnt with real pleasure your return from the West Indies in improved health. Be assured that I interest myself with friendship in your welfare.

The Collector of Annapolis has announced his intention to resign by the first of next month. Do you know a character there fit and probably willing to serve? There is a salary of 200 dollars a year, besides the percentage and fees. The whole, however, is moderate enough.

If any inquiry is made, it must be so as to avoid all possible commitment. For it is the President's practice to seek information through different channels and to decide according to the result of the whole.†

TO ONE OF THE CREDITORS OF COL. DUER.‡

August, 1793.

DEAR SIR:

Poor *Duer* has now had a long and severe confinement, such as would be adequate punishment for no trifling crime. I am well aware of all the blame to which he is liable and do not mean to be his apologist, though I believe he has

* Richard Harrison mentioned above.

† Now first printed from the original in the possession of Mr. Otho H. Williams, of Baltimore.

‡ Colonel Duer remained in prison for five years ("Reminiscences of James A. Hamilton," p. 5). I give this letter as dated in the edition of 1850, where it is misplaced, but its language would suggest a later period, somewhere near the end of Duer's confinement in 1797.

been as much the dupe of his own imagination as others have been the victims of his projects. But what then? He is a man—he is a man with whom we have both been in habits of friendly intimacy. He is a man who, with a great deal of good zeal, has in critical times rendered valuable services to the country. He is a husband who has a most worthy and amiable wife perishing with chagrin at his situation; your relation by blood, mine by marriage. He is a father who has a number of fine children destitute of the means of education and support, every way in need of his future exertions.

These are titles to sympathy, which I shall be mistaken if you do not feel. You are his creditor. Your example may influence others. He wants permission, through a letter of license, to breathe the air for *five* years. Your signature to the inclosed draft of one will give me much pleasure.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, June 21, 1793.

SIR:

Considerations relative to both the public interest and to my own delicacy have brought me, after mature reflection, to a resolution to resign the office I hold towards the close of the ensuing session of Congress.

I postpone the final act to that period, because some propositions remain to be submitted by me to Congress which are necessary to the full development of my original plan, and, as I suppose, of some consequence to my reputation, and because, in the second place, I am desirous of giving an opportunity, while I shall still be in office, to the revival and more deliberate prosecution of the inquiry into my conduct which was instituted during the last session.

I think it proper to communicate my determination thus early, among other reasons, because it will afford full time to investigate and weigh all the considerations which ought to guide the appointment of my successor.

TO RUFUS KING.*

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 13, 1793.

DEAR SIR:

The post of to-day brought me your letter of the 10th, but I was too much engaged to reply to it by return of post.

The facts with regard to Mr. Genet's threat, to appeal from the President to the people, stand thus:

On Saturday, the 6th of July last, the warden of this port reported to Governor Mifflin that the brig Little Sarah, since called the Petit Democrat (an English merchant vessel, mounting from two to four guns, taken off our coast by the French frigate the Ambuscade, and brought into this port), had very materially altered her military equipments, having then fourteen iron cannon and six swivels mounted, and it being understood that her crew was to consist of one hundred and twenty men.

Governor Mifflin, in consequence of this information, sent Mr. Dallas to Mr. Genet to endeavor to prevail upon him to enter into an arrangement for detaining the vessel in port, without the necessity of employing for that purpose military force.

Mr. Dallas reported to Governor Mifflin that Mr. Genet had absolutely refused to do what had been requested of him, that he had been very angry and intemperate, that he had complained of ill-treatment from the government, and had declared that "he would appeal from the President to the people"; mentioned his expectation of the arrival of three ships of the line, observing that he would know how to do justice to his country, or, at least, he had a frigate at his command, and could easily withdraw himself from this; *said that he would not advise an attempt to take possession of the vessel, as it would be resisted.*

* Chief-Justice Jay and Mr. King had declared publicly that Genet had threatened to appeal to the people against the President, which produced profound indignation, and turned the current of public feeling against Genet and his partisans. *Freeman's Gazette* was frantic in its abuse of the informers, as it called them, and Genet denied the charge. Finally Jay and King made a decisive counter-statement, and this letter was written probably to aid in its preparation.

The refusal was so peremptory that Governor Mifflin, in consequence of it, ordered out 120 *men for the purpose of taking possession of the vessel.*

This conversation between Genet and Dallas was *in toto* repeated by General Mifflin to General Knox the day following, and the day after that the governor confirmed to me the declaration with regard to appealing to the people, owned that something like the threat to do justice to his country by means of the ships of the line was thrown out by Mr. Genet, but showed an unwillingness to be explicit on this point, objecting to a more particular disclosure, that it would tend to bring Mr. Dallas into a scrape.

Mr. Jefferson, on Sunday, went to Mr. Genet, to endeavor to prevail upon him to detain the Petit Democrat until the President could return and decide upon the case, but, as Mr. Jefferson afterwards communicated, he absolutely refused to give a promise of the kind, saying only that she would not probably be ready to depart before the succeeding Wednesday, the day of the President's expected return. This, however, Mr. Jefferson construed into an intimation that she would remain. Mr. Jefferson also informed that Mr. Genet had been very unreasonable and intemperate in his conversation (though he did not descend to particulars), *and that Dallas had likewise told him (Mr. Jefferson) that Genet had declared he would appeal from the President to the people.*

The Petit Democrat, instead of remaining, as Mr. Jefferson had concluded, fell down to Chester previous to the Wednesday referred to, where she was when the President returned. A letter was written to Mr. Genet, by order of the President, informing him that the case of the vessel, among others, was under consideration, and desiring that she might be detained until he should come to a decision about her, but this requisition was disregarded. She departed in defiance of it.

I give this detail that you may have the whole subject before you, but I cannot authorize you to make use of it all. The circumstance of the letter may be omitted. It may be said generally that a requisition was made of Mr. Genet, by

order of the President, for the detention of the vessel. All that part, however, which is scored or underlined, may be freely made up. This part is so circumstanced as to take away all scruples of personal or political delicacy. 'T is not so with the rest. It can therefore only be confidentially disclosed to persons whose discretion may be relied on, and whose knowledge of it may be useful.

It is true (as you have heard) that things, if possible still more insulting, have since been done by Mr. Genet; but of this at present no use can be made, no more than of some antecedent transactions nearly, if not quite, as exceptional. The mass would confound Mr. Genet and his associates. Perhaps it may not be long before a promulgation will take place.

I am of opinion with you that the charge ought to be insisted upon.

P. S.—The case does not require the naming General Knox or myself, and it will therefore not be done. It is to be observed that the equipments of the Petit Democrat are, in the strictest sense, an original fitting out. She was before a merchant vessel; here she was converted into a vessel commissioned for war, of considerable force.

TO RUFUS KING.

August, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR:

It is not yet finally determined that there shall be a publication, and there has been some difference of opinion on the point. But it seems to me the publication of the letters renders it indispensable that the whole should be told. Yet, when it appears, it will probably include only what is regularly official, so that the present question may be pursued independently.

Perhaps you will not think it necessary at first to say to whom Dallas reported the conversation. Yet, if you deem it essential, it may be done, and should it be finally necessary, which is not at all probable, General Knox and myself will come forward as witnesses.

TO MRS. GENERAL GREENE.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 3, 1793.

It is not an uncommon thing for you women to bring us poor men into scrapes. It seems you have brought me into one. You will wonder how. Hear the tale.

Shortly after I came into office, Wadsworth informed me that Baron Glaubeck was indebted to General Greene (to whom he had behaved in a very exceptionable manner), and that it was intended to endeavor to purchase of Glaubeck some pay which had been just granted to him by Congress, upon the plan of advancing to him a certain sum of money to satisfy his immediate necessities, and the residue that was due to him to be applied towards the indemnification of the General's estate for what Glaubeck owed to it. I afterwards understood that the execution of this plan was committed to Flint or Duer, or one or both of them, and that a purchase of the claim was, in fact, made—not, indeed, of Glaubeck, but of some person to whom he had parted with it for some trifling consideration—the object being throughout to benefit you by way of indemnification as above mentioned.

It likewise would appear from the Treasury records that you have in fact received the whole benefit of the purchase. The conversations we had together when you were last in Philadelphia assure me at least that the certificate for four fifths of his claim accrued immediately to your use.

Francis, late a clerk in my department (partly from resentment at a disappointment he has met with at the Treasury, and partly, I believe, from its having been made *worth his while* by some political enemies of mine), endeavors to have it believed that this transaction was a speculation in which I was engaged, and in proof of it, shows a draft of a power of attorney, corrected by some interlineations in my handwriting, as he asserts.

I do not recollect this part of the business, though I think it very possible that such a correction, in such a draft, may have been made by me.

For Duer or Flint, it seems, employed Francis to make the purchase, and it is not unlikely that a draft of a power for the purpose may have been brought to me, to know from me whether it would answer the purpose of the Treasury as a competent instrument, and that I (believing the design to be such as I have represented—one not only unexceptionable, but laudable—one in which my friendship for you would naturally take part) may have taken up my pen and made such corrections as the draft might appear to stand in need of.

I give you this detail to show you how I may have been implicated.

What I wish of you is that you will have the goodness to state in writing what you know of the affair, ascertaining that the purchase was for your benefit and the cause of it, and that you will take the trouble to make affidavit to the statement, and forward it to me:

As it is an affair of delicacy, I will thank you to request some gentleman of the law to give form and precision to your narrative.

You perceive that it is not in one way only that I am the object of unprincipled persecution; but I console myself with these lines of the poet—

> But optics sharp it needs, I ween,
> To see what is not to be seen;

and with this belief, that in spite of calumny the friends I love and esteem will continue to love and esteem me.

TO JEREMIAH WADSWORTH.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 3, 1793.

MY DEAR WADSWORTH:

Shortly after I came into office I remember your having told me that Glaubeck (whom you represented as a worthless and ungrateful fellow) was indebted to General Greene's estate, I think, for money lent him, and that it was your intention to endeavor to effect a purchase of his public claim,

and allow him some part of it for his immediate necessities, letting the residue be an indemnification [*original illegible*] estate; or, in other words, go to the [*original illegible*] that he would [*original illegible*] something [*original illegible*] you left the city; that you had left the business in charge with Flint.

The purchase of the claim was afterwards made through a second hand, and it appears in *fact* that Mrs. Greene has had the benefit of it.

Francis, lately a clerk in my department, prompted partly by resentment and partly, I believe, by some political enemies, gives out that I assisted in this affair as a *speculation*, and, to prove it, shows the draft of a power for assigning the claim, with some corrections, which are said to be in my handwriting.

Whether this be so or not I really do not now recollect, but I think it very possible that, having understood the matter in the light I have stated from you, and viewing the transaction [*original illegible*] precision the course of the transaction as it stands in your recollection, particularly what passed between you and myself in the first instance. If not inconvenient to you, I should even be glad that you would attest to it.

TO MISS ANGELICA HAMILTON.

September 21, 1793.

I was very glad to learn, my dear daughter, that you were going to begin the study of the French language. We hope you will in every respect behave in such a manner as will secure to you the good-will and regard of all those with whom you are. If you happen to displease any of them, be always ready to make a frank apology. But the best way is to act with so much politenesss, good manners, and circumspection as never to have occasion to make any apology. Your mother joins in best love to you. Adieu, my very dear daughter.*

* Reprinted from "Reminiscences of J. A. Hamilton," p. 4.

TO ———.

ALBANY, October 1, 1793.

Contemptible as you are, what answer could I give to your last letter? The enclosed is a copy of what shortly will appear in one of the gazettes of the City of New York:

"One Andrew G. Francis, late clerk in the Treasury Department, has been endeavoring to have it believed that he is possessed of some facts of a nature to criminate the official conduct of the Secretary of the Treasury, an idea to which, for obvious reasons, an extensive circulation has been given by a certain description of persons.

"The public may be assured that the said Francis has been regularly and repeatedly called upon to declare the grounds of his suggestion, that he has repeatedly evaded the inquiry, that he possesses no facts of the nature pretended, and that he is a despicable calumniator." *

TO COLONEL OLNEY.†

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 26, 1793.

DEAR SIR:

Some embarrassment has arisen on the subject of a fit person for District Attorney of Rhode Island. Mr. Howell ‡

* This letter is reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vol. v., p. 424. At the previous session Giles and Madison had made this attack on Hamilton, who had replied to them, and who then, on December 16, 1792, asked for another inquiry. Before this his enemies attempted to arouse feeling against him by procuring one Francis, a dismissed clerk, to declare that Hamilton had speculated in soldiers' certificates, and they are said even to have sent a lawyer to Philadelphia to collect evidence. Hamilton thereupon published the card quoted above, which dashed the whole slander to pieces. It was in this connection that this letter was written, but the whole matter is so blindly stated in the "History of the Republic" that it is impossible to tell whether the letter was addressed to the lawyer just referred to, to some anonymous assailant, or to some one of the Secretary's open enemies.

† Colonel Jeremiah Olney, of Rhode Island, a soldier of the Revolution and Collector of Customs at Providence.

‡ David Howell, of Rhode Island, Professor of Law in Brown University. He had been delegate to Congress, 1782-1785, and Attorney-General and Judge of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island. He was appointed District Attorney, and from 1812 till his death, in 1824, was U. S. District Judge.

has been strongly recommended on the one hand, and positively objected to on another, and Mr. ——— has been proposed in opposition. Your opinion does not appear on either side.

The President is desirous of further information, and I have undertaken to procure it for him. In addressing myself to you on the point, I proceed on an assurance of your judgment and candor. I request your ideas of the candidates fully and freely, promising that it shall not in any shape compromit you. Be so good as to state not only the qualifications of each, *but the collateral circumstanees affecting the public service*, which will be likely to attend the appointment of either.

It is regretted that the affair has assumed too much a party complexion. This suggests an inquiry whether there be not some third character competent, eligible, and who would not be liable to a similar difficulty. The more speedy your answer, the more it will oblige.

TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Feb. 22, 1794.

SIR:

I have received a late order of the Senate on the subject of a petition of Arthur Hughes. Diligent search has been made for such a petition, and it has not been found. Neither have I now a distinct recollection of ever having seen it. Whether, therefore, it may not have originally failed in the transmission to me, or may have become mislaid by a temporary displacement of the papers of my immediate office, occasioned by a fire which consumed a part of the building in the use of the Treasury, or by some of those accidents which in an extensive scene of business will sometimes attend papers, especially those of inferior importance, is equally open to conviction. There is no record in the office of its having been received, nor do any of my clerks remember to have seen it. A search in the Auditor's office has brought up the enclosed paper, which it is pre-

sumed relates to the object of the petition; but this paper, it will appear from the memorandum accompanying it, was placed in that office prior to the reference of the petition.

The Auditor of the Treasury is of opinion, though his recollection is suppositive, that the claim had relation to the services of John Hughes as forage master. Two objections opposed its admission: (1) the not being presented in time; (2) the name of John Hughes, in the capacity in which he claimed, not appearing upon any return in the Treasury.

If these be the circumstances, I should be of opinion that it would not be advisable by a special legislative interposition to except the case out of the operation of the acts of limitation.

The second order of the Senate on the subject of this petition leads to the following reflections:

Does this hitherto unusual proceeding (in a case of no public and no peculiar private importance) imply a supposition that there has been undue delay or negligence on the part of the Secretary of the Treasury?

If it does, the supposition is unmerited; not merely from the circumstances of the paper, which have been stated, but from the known situation of the officer. The occupations necessarily and permanently incident to the office are at least sufficient fully to occupy the time and faculties of one man. The burden is seriously increased by the numerous private cases, remnants of the late war, which every session are objects of particular reference by the two Houses of Congress. These accumulated occupations again have been interrupted in their due course by unexpected, desultory, and distressing calls for lengthy and complicated statements, sometimes with a view to general information, sometimes for the explanation of points which certain leading facts, witnessed by the provisions of the laws and by information previously communicated, might have explained without those statements, or which were of a nature that did not seem to have demanded a laborious, critical, and suspicious investigation, unless the officer was understood to have for-

feited his title to a reasonable and common degree of confidence. Added to these things, it is known that the affairs of the country in its external relations have for some time past been so circumstanced as unavoidably to have thrown additional avocations on all the branches of the Executive Department, and that a late peculiar calamity in the city of Philadelphia has had consequences that cannot have failed to derange more or less the course of public business.

In such a situation, was it not the duty of the officer to postpone matters of mere individual concern to topics of public and general concern, to the preservation of the essential order of the department committed to his care? Or, is it extraordinary that in relation to cases of the first description there should have been a considerable degree of procrastination? Might not an officer who is conscious that public observation and opinion, whatever deficiencies they may impute to him, will not rank among them want of attention and industry, have hoped to escape censure, expressed or implied, on that score?

I will only add that the consciousness of devoting myself to the public service to the utmost extent of my faculties and to the injury of my health, is a tranquillizing consolation of which I cannot be deprived by any supposition to the contrary.

With perfect respect, etc.*

TO WASHINGTON.

March 8, 1794.

The present situation of the United States is undoubtedly critical, and demands measures vigorous, though prudent. We ought to be in a respectable military posture, because war may come upon us, whether we choose it or not; and because, to be in a condition to defend ourselves, and annoy

* Reprinted from "American State Papers," Claims, p. 77. This letter has also been reprinted in Adams' "Life of Gallatin," p. 116. It is a very interesting and somewhat amusing document, and it may be doubted if any other Secretary of the Treasury ever dared to lecture the Senate in this way.

any who may attack us, will be the best method of securing our peace. If it is known that our principal maritime points are out of the reach of any but formal serious operations, and that the government has an efficient active force in its disposal for defence or offence on an emergency, there will be much less temptation to attack us, and much more hesitation to provoke us.

It seems then advisable—

1. To fortify the principal ports in the several States (say one in each State), so as to be able to resist a merely maritime attack, or any thing but a regular siege.

2. To raise 20,000 auxiliary troops, upon a plan something like the following, viz.:

To be divided into ten regiments.

Each regiment to consist of two battalions, and of the following officers and men:

1 colonel, 2 majors, 10 captains, 20 lieutenants, 2 lieutenants and adjutants, 2 sergeant-majors, 40 sergeants, 4 musicians, and 1,000 rank and file.

These troops to be engaged upon the following terms:

To be enlisted for two years; but upon condition, that if a war should break out with any European power, they shall be obliged to serve four years from the commencement of such war, upon the same terms as the troops of the establishment.

To receive as a bounty, clothes with 12 dollars per man.

To be under an obligation to meet forty days in the year, and thirty of these days to encamp. When assembled, to be paid, officers and men, as the troops of the establishment, and to have the same subsistence and rations. To be furnished with arms and accoutrements by the United States, to be surrendered at the expiration of their term of service.

The officers in time of war to rank and rise with the officers of the military establishment. The arrangement to cease, *ipso facto*, at the expiration of a certain term (about two years).

The expense of these operations would be,

For the fortifications, ...	$150,000
For the auxiliary troops, per annum, . . .	350,000
	$500,000

In addition to this, the Legislature ought to vest the President of the United States with the power to lay an embargo, partial or general, and to arrest the exportation of commodities, partially or generally.

It may also deserve consideration whether the Executive ought not to take measures to form some concert of the neutral powers for common defence.

Mr. Hamilton presents his respects to the President—submits to him some reveries whieh have occupied his imagination. It may be interesting for the President to consider whether some such plan is not demanded by the conjuncture of affairs; and if so, whether there ought not to be some Executive impulse. Many persons look to the President for the suggestion of measures corresponding with the exigency of affairs. As far as this idea may be founded, many important and delicate ideas are involved in the consideration.

The pains taken to preserve peace, include a proportional responsibility that equal pains be taken to be prepared for war.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, May 27, 1794.

SIR:

I some time since communicated my intention to withdraw from the office I hold, towards the close of the present session.

This I should now put in execution, but for the events which have lately accumulated, of a nature to render the prospects of the continuance of our peace in a considerable degree precarious. I do not perceive that I could voluntarily quit my post at such a juncture consistently with con-

siderations either of duty or character; and therefore I find myself reluctantly obliged to defer the offer of my resignation.

But if any circumstances should have taken place in consequence of the intimation of an intention to resign, or should otherwise exist, which serve to render my continuance in office in any degree inconvenient or ineligible, I beg leave to assure you, sir, I should yield to them with all the readiness naturally inspired by an impatient desire to relinquish a situation opposed by the strongest personal and family relations, and in which even a momentary stay could only be produced by a sense of duty or reputation.

TO JAY.

PHILADELPHIA, June 4, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR:

The session of Congress is about to close better than I expected. All mischievous measures have been prevented, and several good ones have been established. Among these, additional provisions of revenue and some of force, are not the least important.

But as more immediately connected with the objects of your mission, you will learn with satisfaction, that the bill which had passed the Senate before you left this, for punishing and preventing practices contrary to neutrality, has become a law with only one material alteration, the rejection of the clause which forbids the selling of prizes. I now consider the Executive and the Judiciary, as armed with adequate means for repressing the fitting out of privateers, the taking of commissions, or enlisting in foreign service, the unauthorized undertaking of military expeditions, etc.

At Charleston some considerable irregularities have lately happened. But means have been taken, and are in train, which will no doubt arrest their progress, and correct the evil.

I believe it would be useful for you to collect and com-

municate exact information with regard to the usage of Europe as to permitting the sale of prizes in neutral countries. If this should be clearly against the toleration of the practice, the Executive might still, perhaps, disembarrass itself.

Men's minds have gotten over the irritation by which they were some time since possessed, and if Great Britain is disposed to justice, peace, and conciliation, the two countries may still arrive at a better understanding than has for some time subsisted between them. Is there not a crisis which she ought not to suffer to pass, without laying a solid foundation for future harmony? I think there is.

Adieu, my dear sir: not knowing how far any press of business on the Department of State might delay its communications, I thought a few hasty lines would not be unacceptable.

TO WASHINGTON.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, July 13, 1794.

I have considered the two subjects upon which you desire my opinion, as maturely as my situation has permitted.

With regard to the proceedings in Kentucky, I perceive nothing that can, with propriety or utility, be done, unless the attorney-general, on full and careful examination, should be of opinion that they furnish indictable matter, in which case I should think it very material that prosecutions against the ostensible and leading characters should be instituted.

With regard to the affair in Georgia, the following course presents itself as eligible:

1. To urge the Governor of Georgia to employ, efficaciously, all the means in his power (that of military coercion, if necessary, excepted) to prevent the establishment supposed to be meditated, referring him to the late act of Congress, and informing him that the expense will be borne by the United States. The commanding officer of the troops of the United States to be directed to co-operate.

2. To apprise the Creek nation of the information which has been received, and to assure them that the United States will co-operate with them to prevent the intrusion in the first instance, and afterwards to dispossess the intruders. It may, perhaps, be made a consideration for urging them to run the line of the last treaty.

3. To mention the matter informally to the Spanish commissioners, expressing the disapprobation of the government, and its intention to exert all the measures in its power to frustrate the enterprise.

TO RUFUS KING.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 17, 1794.

When you recollect that I have two departments on my shoulders, and when I tell you that I have been out of health in the bargain, you will perhaps admit an excuse for my not answering sooner your letter some time since received.

Mr. Jay has given nothing conclusive. His letters to the 26th of June barely gave the idea that appearances were not unfavorable. The last letter, I forget the date, but it came by the last arrival at New York, refers to letters which were not received, but which are supposed to have been confided to the Portuguese Minister. This letter is couched in the same cautious terms, considers the scale as capable of turning either way, and advises not to relax in military preparation. The ministry, however, have certainly continued to countenance shipments to this country, and very large ones were making. It is a strange, mysterious business. The change in administration had made some pause in the negotiation.

Nothing from the Western country authorizes an expectation of a pacific termination of that business. All the militia are going forward as fast as they can be got forward. Virginia, all below the mountains, is *zealous;* beyond, neutral in conduct and divided in affection. Jersey is also zeal-

ous; so are the eastern shore of Maryland and the town of Baltimore. Thence to Frederictown a pretty good temper prevails; beyond that a very insurgent spirit and some insurrection. In Philadelphia an excellent and productive zeal, embracing all parties, has been kindled. A good spirit will generally pervade the old counties. But there is much bad leaven in the new counties this side of as well as beyond the mountains—Cumberland, Franklin, Mifflin, and even Northumberland.

Governor Lee is at the head of the Virginia militia, and will command if the President does not go out; he is all zeal. Governor Howell, with equal zeal, was to march from Trenton to-day with the van of the Jersey militia, consisting of 500 horse. Mifflin, who at first showed some untoward symptoms, appears now to be exerting himself in earnest and with great effect, and goes at the head of his militia.

The President will be governed by circumstances. If the thing puts on an appearance of magnitude, he goes; if not, he stays. There is a *pro* and a *con* in the case. If *permitted*, I shall at any rate go.

TO RUFUS KING.

September 22, 1794.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your letter of the ——. A few days previously I wrote you pretty fully. I hope my letter got to hand.

The inclosed paper gives you the substance of our European intelligence under the Philadelphia head.

The returns from the western counties of this State are just come to hand. They show a valuable division, ranging on the side of the laws the most influential men, and a respectable body of others—but leaving a great number still uncomplying and violent, so as to afford no appearance of submission to the laws without the application of force. It will give you pleasure to learn that there is every prospect of our being able to apply this effectually, and of the issue be-

ing favorable to the authority of the laws. It will occasion a large bill of costs, but what is that compared with the object? Adieu.

TO GEORGE MATTHEWS, GOVERNOR OF GEORGIA.

WAR DEPARTMENT, Sept. 25, 1794.

SIR:

In the absence of the Secretary of War, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters to his department of the 5th, 19th, and 30th of August, and to reply to such parts as are the most pressing, referring the others to the return of that officer.

Among the posts which have been established, that of Doctor's Town creates a question, in consequence of Lieutenant Colonel Gaither's information that it is within the Indian boundary.

This is a matter which ought to be unequivocally ascertained, and if found to be within the Indian line, or if it be even doubtful whether that be the case, the post must be immediately removed. It is deemed essential that no encroachment should take place. And your Excellency is relied upon for a strict and scrupulous adherence to this principle.

Under the circumstances which led to it, the President has thought proper to authorize the adoption by the United States of the new troop ordered by you into service, from the time of its commencement, and to continue until the first of November ensuing, when it is to be disbanded.

And you are at liberty, if the state of things shall render it, in your judgment essential, to substitute at that time a company of infantry for the same purpose. Corps of horse, upon the terms on which that in question is engaged, are expensive in the extreme, and in a much greater proportion, compared with infantry, than any supposable superiority of usefulness can justify. Indeed, it would require a treasury much better supplied than that of the United States to support the expense of a multiplication or extension of such corps. Con-

sequently, that multiplication or extension would tend to defeat its own object, for our instruments of defence, to be durable, must be relative to our means of supporting them. And when we find, as in the instance of the insurrection now existing in the western parts of Pennsylvania, that those for whose immediate benefit the objects of military expenditure occur are among the first to resist, even to violence, the necessary means of defraying them, it is easy to appreciate the perplexing dilemma to which the government is reduced, between the *duty* and the *means* of affording protection, and the necessity, consequently, of economy in the modes of effecting it.

Your Excellency is pleased to express your concern at being so repeatedly compelled to solicit protection for the State of Georgia.

This is not understood as implying any want of due disposition on the part of the Executive of this government to afford all the protection which is within the compass of the means placed within its power, having regard to all the objects which, along a very extended frontier, equally demand attention. It is not doubted that you render justice, in this respect, to the views of the Executive.

But the observation you have made in this particular naturally leads to another, which calls for the most serious attention of the governments of the States exposed to Indian depredations. It is this, that there is a reciprocal duty in the case. The obligation upon the United States to afford adequate protection to the inhabitants of the frontiers is no doubt of the highest and most sacred kind. But there is a duty no less strong upon those inhabitants to avoid giving occasion to hostilities by an irregular and improper conduct, and upon the local governments sincerely and effectually to punish and repress instances of such conduct, and the spirit which produces them. If these inhabitants can with impunity thwart all the measures of the United States for restoring or preserving peace, if they can with impunity commit depredations and outrages upon the Indians, and that

in violation of the faith of the United States, pledged not only in their general treaties, but even in the special (and among all nations peculiarly sacred) case of a safe conduct, as in the instance of the attack upon the Indians while encamped within our protection, on the 10th of May last, can it be surprising if such circumstances should abate the alacrity of the national councils to encounter those heavy expenses which the protection of the frontiers occasions, and of the readiness of the citizens of the United States distant from the scenes of danger to acquiesce in the burdens they produce? It is not meant by these remarks to diminish the force of the excuse within due limits which is drawn from the conduct of the Indians towards the frontier inhabitants. It cannot be denied that frequent and great provocations to a spirit of animosity and revenge are given by them, but a candid and impartial survey of the events which have from time to time occurred can leave no doubt that injuries and provocations have been too far mutual, that there is much to blame in the conduct of the frontier inhabitants, as well as in that of the Indians. And the result of a full examination must be that, unless means to restrain by punishing the violences which those inhabitants are in the habit of perpetrating against the Indians can be put in execution, all endeavors to preserve peace with them must be forever frustrated.

An example worthy of imitation in its spirit has lately been given by the surrender to Governor Blount of some Indians who lately committed a murder upon one John Ish, an inhabitant of the southwestern territory, and who have been tried and executed. The record of such an example of justice and fair dealing will give occasion to us to blush, if we can cite no instance of reciprocity amidst the numerous occasions which are given for the exercise of it.

These reflections, your Excellency may be assured, are merely designed to present to consideration some very important truths—truths a due attention to which is of the most serious concern to those States which have an exposed

frontier. To give full weight to their claims upon the exertions of the Union to afford the requisite protection, it is of great moment to satisfy the United States that the necessity for them has not been created or promoted by a culpable temper, not sufficiently restrained among those to whom the protection is immediately to be extended.

The President learns with great pleasure the measures your Excellency had begun and was about to pursue for the removal of the settlers under General Clarke. It is impossible to conceive a settlement more unjustifiable in its pretexts, or more dangerous in its principle than that which he is attempting. It is not only a high-handed usurpation of the rights of the general and State governments, and a most unwarrantable encroachment upon those of the Indians, but proceeding upon the idea of a separate and independent government, to be erected on a *military basis*, it is essentially hostile to our republican systems of government, and is pregnant with incalculable mischiefs. It deeply concerns the great interests of the country that such an establishment should not be permitted to take root, and that the example should be checked by adequate punishment, in doing which no time is to be lost, for such is the nature of the establishment that it may be expected rapidly to attain to a formidable magnitude, involving great expense and trouble to subvert it.

The President therefore depends absolutely upon measures equally prompt and efficacious to put an end to it.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 29, 1794.

SIR:

Being about to leave the seat of government for a few weeks, to accompany the army in its march against the western insurgents of Pennsylvania, I commit to you during my absence the management of those matters which are reserved to my superintendence, under the constitution and

* Comptroller of the Treasury.

regulations of the department, especially the receipts and expenditures of money, and I rely upon your diligence and zeal that nothing will suffer during my absence. With regard to remissions and mitigations of penalties and forfeitures, it will be best to avoid acting in any case in which particular inconvenience will not arise from delay, as there is not time to explain the principles which have governed in the past, and the course of policy may, without such explanation, be innovated upon so as to occasion something like inconsistency. But in urgent cases you will act, consulting the most recent precedents in similar cases. To preserve the usual forms, I have signed and left in my office a large number of blank warrrants of the different kinds which issue. Enclosed is a letter to the President and Directors of the Bank of New York. If they agree to loan you will conclude it. You will find in the office a power from the President for the purpose. It will be regular in any contract which may be made to pursue the terms of the power as to parties.*

TO RUFUS KING.

JONES' MILL, Oct. 30, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

Our light corps, the Jersey infantry, and a brigade of cavalry, are about eight and a half miles in front, beyond all the mountains. This division, which has been delayed by a somewhat worse route and the incumbrance of the public stores, will be at the same place this evening. The left wing is at a corresponding point. All is essentially well; no appearance of opposition. It is of great consequence that a law should, if possible, be expedited through Congress for raising 500 infantry and 100 horse, to be stationed in the disaffected country. Without this, the expense incurred will be essentially fruitless.

A law regulating a peace process of outlawry is also urgent; for the best objects of punishment will fly, and

* Reprinted from "Administrations of Washington and Adams," i., 155.

they ought to be compelled by outlawry to abandon their property, homes, and the United States. This business must not be skinned over. The political putrefaction of Pennsylvania is greater than I had any idea of. Without rigor everywhere, our tranquillity is likely to be of very short duration, and the next storm will be infinitely worse than the present one.

TO A FRIEND IN EUROPE.

1794.

My own hope of making a short excursion to Europe the ensuing spring increases. Believe me, I am heartily tired of my situation, and wait only the opportunity of quitting it with honor and without decisive prejudice to the public affairs. This winter, I trust, will wind up my plans so as to secure my reputation. The present appearance is that the depending elections will prove favorable to the good cause and obviate anxiety for the future. In this event my present determination is to resign my political family and set seriously about the care of my private family. Previous to this I will visit Europe. There I shall have the happiness of meeting you once more. But will not a few months afterwards give us the pang of a final separation? Let us hope the best. Adieu.*

TO THOMAS FITZSIMMONS.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 27, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

Seeing the debates on the subject of Democratic Societies, I called at your house to state some facts.

It is true that the opposition to the excise laws began from causes foreign to Democratic Societies, but it is well ascertained by proof in the course of judiciary investigations

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., 193, where it has neither address nor date. This letter, however, must have been written in the autumn of 1794, as the reference to the pending elections and the writer's resignation in the following winter shows.

that the insurrection immediately is to be essentially attributed to one of those societies sometimes called the Mingo-Creek Society, sometimes the Democratic Society. An early and active member of it commanded the first attack at Neville's House; another active member of that Society, McFarlane, the second attack. Benjamin Parkinson, the president, and several other members of it seem to have directed the second attack as a committee. This may be asserted as founded upon good proof and information recently received, though it would not be consistent with decorum to name me. Make what use you please of this, and communicate it to other friends.*

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 1, 1794.

SIR:

I have the honor to inform you that I have fixed upon the last of January next as the day for the resignation of my office of Secretary of the Treasury. I make the communication now that there may be time to mature such an arrangement as shall appear to you proper to meet the vacancy when it occurs.

TO WASHINGTON.

December 2, 1794.

The Secretary of the Treasury has the honor respectfully to make the following representation to the President of the United States, in order that he may determine on the expediency of laying the subject of it before Congress.

The procuring of military supplies generally is, with great propriety, vested by law in the Department of the Treasury. That department, from situation, may be expected to feel a more habitual solicitude for economy than any other, and to possess more means of information respecting the best modes of obtaining supplies.

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., 123.

It is, however, important that the particular arrangement should be such as to enable the department to execute the trust in the best manner. This branch of business forms a very considerable one of the public expenditure. Including supplies for the navy, it is so extensive as, to be well executed, would occupy the whole time and attention of one person, possessing the requisite qualifications. This, with the growth of the country, must be every year more and more the case. It cannot, therefore, be conducted in detail by the head of the department, or by any existing officer of it, now charged with other duties, and without being less well executed than it ought to be, or interfering with other essential duties, or without a portion of both these inconveniences, to the material detriment of the public service. Experience has already verified the position.

It must then, of necessity, either be confided to a special agent, employed by the head of the department, or to a new officer of the department, to be constituted by law, and to act under the discretion and superintendence of that head. The last mode is preferable to the first, for obvious reasons.

Whenever an object of public business is likely to be permanent, it is more fit that it should be transacted by an officer of the government, regularly constituted, than by the agent of a department, specially intrusted.

The officer can be placed, by law, under more effectual checks. In the present case, that idea is particularly important. The person intrusted ought to be prohibited, under penalties, from all dealing, on his own account, in the objects of supply.

The duration and emoluments of mere agency being precarious, a well-qualified man, disposed to make the necessary sacrifices of other pursuits, and to devote himself exclusively to the business, could with much greater difficulty, if at all, be found.

The compensation to such an officer ought, it is conceived, to weigh nothing as an objection. Independent of the equivalent expense, arising from the necessity of employing

and compensating an agent, it is morally certain that the close, constant, undivided attention of a person, charged exclusively with this object, and in condition, for that reason, to make the minute as well as extensive inquiries and investigations which are often requisite, would produce savings to the United States with which the salary of the officer could bear no comparison. It is equally evident that it would contribute greatly to punctuality, despatch, and efficiency in procuring the supplies.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 26, 1795.

SIR:

Mr. Wolcott has just informed me that the Secretary of State had called upon him as by your direction, to confer on the subject of a person to be appointed Comptroller, in the event of his appointment as Secretary of the Treasury; and intimated that you had concluded to take some gentleman from the South; that Mr. Habersham (brother of the collector of Savannah) was more particularly in your eye, and that if he or I had any different view of the subject, it was your wish that it might be speedily communicated, as you were desirous of coming to a conclusion.

This I accordingly feel it my duty to do.

It is of the greatest importance to the proper conducting the business of the Treasury Department that the Comptroller should be a man of the following description: of strong sense, of clear discernment, sound judgment, indefatigable industry, firmness, and prompt decision of temper; possessing a comprehensive knowledge of accounts, and of course good principles.

As well from the nature of the office as from the particular situation of the department, as it will stand at the moment of my resignation, it is of peculiar consequence that there should be no mistake in the selection of the proper character for Comptroller. It will be easy for the department to run into disorder if such a mistake should happen.

From all the light I have been able to obtain on the subject, though it results in a favorable impression of Mr. Habersham generally, yet it leaves a considerable doubt on my mind that he would be an eligible appointment as Comptroller of the Treasury. I cannot, therefore, add my opinion to the rest of the opinions which may favor it.

There is one gentleman South, whom I have before mentioned, of whose fitness in every respect, from trial of him in different public situations, it appears to me impossible to entertain a doubt—I mean Colonel Edward Carrington. I will pledge my reputation to the President for his proving, if appointed, an excellent Comptroller, and a valuable acquisition to the department.

I have fully reflected on the objection which, from the distributive geographical rule, is supposed to be against him —and I beg leave to submit, as my opinion, that it ought not to be conclusive. This rule is doubtless a good one; but if carried so far as to hazard the appointment of unqualified persons to offices of material importance to the general administration of the government, it will become a bad one, sacrificing primary to secondary considerations.

I have offered my opinion with the less reserve because I ought to be explicit in a case not only of much moment to the public service, but when the arrangements which may be made, may, naturally from situation, be presumed to have had the concurrence of my opinion, and where, therefore, my reputation is more particularly concerned.

TO WILLINK, VAN STAPHORST, & HUBBARD.*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Jan. 31, 1795.

GENTLEMEN:

It is probable that before this reaches you, you will have heard of my determination to resign my office as Secretary of the Treasury as on this day. The event will accordingly take place.

* The Dutch bankers who had had charge of our financial negotiations in Holland.

I could not permit myself to renounce my official situation without placing among my last acts the expression of the high sense I continue to entertain of the fidelity and ability with which you have uniformly served the United States. This testimony is due to you, and it is with great pleasure I give it.

The gentleman whom the President has determined to nominate as my successor, and who will be no doubt appointed, is Oliver Wolcott, Esquire, the present Comptroller of the Treasury. I do him no more than justice by assuring you that he is a gentleman of undoubted intelligence, probity, and good principles with regard to public credit. The confidence of yourselves and your countrymen may be safely reposed in him.

TO WASHINGTON.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Jan. 31, 1795.

SIR:

Agreeably to the intimation heretofore given, I have the honor now to tender you my resignation of the office of Secretary of the Treasury, and to be with sincere respect and affectionate attachment, sir, etc.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

Sunday, Feb. 1, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I received the enclosed letter, with the document therein, last night.

For reasons which will appear obvious, I make you acquainted with the contents of them—being yours,

G. WASHINGTON.

Endorsement on this letter by A. H.

This covered a letter from Mr. Coxe, of the 31st January,* 1795, containing a charge against Mr. Wolcott, for my hav-

* This letter curiously shows the hostility which pursued Hamilton even when leaving office. The writer was Tench Coxe, who was an officer in the Department. See following letter of Feb. 12, to Washington.

ing committed to him, and he having exercised, the duties of Secretary of the Treasury in my absence on the Western expedition. A. H.

WASHINGTON TO HAMILTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 2, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

After so long an experience of your public services, I am naturally led, at this moment of your departure from office —which it has always been my wish to prevent—to review them.

In every relation which you have borne to me I have found that my confidence in your talents, exertions, and integrity, has been well placed.

I the more freely render this testimony of my approbation, because I speak from opportunities of information which cannot deceive me, and which furnish satisfactory proof of your title to public regard.

My most earnest wishes for your happiness will attend you in your retirement, and you may assure yourself of the sincere esteem, regard, and friendship of, etc.

TO WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 3, 1795.

SIR:

My particular acknowledgments are due for your very kind letter of yesterday. As often as I may recall the vexations I have endured, your approbation will be a great and precious consolation.

It was not without a struggle that I yielded to the very urgent motives which impelled me to relinquish a station in which I could hope to be in any degree instrumental in promoting the success of an administration under your direction; a struggle which would have been far greater had I supposed that the prospect of future usefulness was proportioned to the sacrifices to be made.

Whatsoever may be my destination hereafter, I entreat you to be persuaded (not the less for my having been sparing in professions) that I shall never cease to render a just tribute to those eminent and excellent qualities which have been already productive of so many blessings to your country, that you will always have my fervent wishes for your public and personal felicity, and that it will be my pride to cultivate a continuance of that esteem, regard, and friendship of which you do me the honor to assure me. With true respect and affectionate attachment, etc.

TO WASHINGTON.

(*Private.*)

SIR: PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 12, 1795.

I have maturely reflected on the subject of the within papers. I do not hesitate to give it as my opinion that, if it were not for *very peculiar personal* circumstances, the fittest arrangement, upon the whole, would be to consign the temporary execution of the comptroller's office to the commissioner of the revenue. But I could not advise this, because it could not fail, for strong reasons, to be unpleasant to Mr. Wolcott, and because there is real danger that Mr. Coxe would first perplex and embarrass, and afterward misrepresent and calumniate.

The treasurer would by no means answer, because, as the *keeper of the money*, it is particularly essential that all the checks upon him should be maintained in full vigor, and the comptroller is the officer who, in the last resort, *settles* his accounts, as well as concurs, in the first instance, in *authorizing*, by the warrants which are issued by the secretary, and countersigned by the comptroller, the payments and receipts of the treasurer.

The register is also one of the principal checks of the department: first, upon the secretary and comptroller, whose warrants he must register and sign before they can take effect; and secondly, upon the settlements of the comptroller

and auditor, by recording their acts, and entering them upon the books to the proper accounts.

Of any of the officers of the department, except the commissioner of the revenue, the business can be best managed through the auditor, consistently with the preservation of the most material checks, with the restriction I mentioned this morning, *of his not deciding, as comptroller, upon any account he may have settled as auditor.* The temporary suspension of the final conclusion of the accounts—all the previous examinations going on, cannot be attended with any serious inconvenience. If the laws admit of it (which I doubt, as they now stand), the appointment of the auditor's first clerk to act as the auditor in his stead will be a conveniency. I do not think this would be liable to the same objections as the appointing a clerk to act as comptroller, whose office imports the second trust in the department. In one sense, to appoint the auditor to act as comptroller, would comport best with the spirit of the constitution of the department. This is, that *the officer who is to settle* the accounts by countersigning the warrants for *receipts* and payments, shall have an opportunity to observe this conformity with the course of business as it appears in the accounts, and shall have notice in the first instance of all payments and receipts, in order to the bringing all persons to account for public moneys. This reason operates to make the auditor, who is the coadjutor of the comptroller in settlements, his most fit substitute *in this particular view.*

On the whole, I am of opinion that it is most advisable to appoint the auditor.*

A clerk, for reasons already mutually adverted to, does not appear to me expedient. I have the honor to be, etc.

P. S.—*The restriction* above suggested, for greater caution, had best be in writing in a letter to the Secretary of the Treasury.

The instrument appears to me to be in proper form.

* Richard Harrison.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

BRISTOL, Feb. 18, 1795.

MY DEAR SEDGWICK:

Every moment's reflection increases my chagrin and disgust at the failure of the propositions concerning the unsubscribed debt. I am tortured by the idea that the country should be so completely and unnecessarily dishonored. A day of reckoning must come. I pray you let the yeas and nays separate the *wheat* from the *chaff*. I may otherwise have to feel the distress of wounding a friend by a shaft levelled at an enemy. The case is an extreme one. Managements are every way improper.

TO RUFUS KING.

KINGSTON, Feb. 21, 1795.

MY DEAR KING:

The unnecessary and capricious and abominable assassination of the national honor by the rejection of the propositions respecting the unsubscribed debt in the House of Representatives haunts me every step I take, and afflicts me more than I can express. To see the character of the government and the country so sported with—exposed to so indelible a blot—puts my heart to the torture. Am I, then, more of an American than those who drew their first breath on American ground? Or what is it that thus torments me at a circumstance so calmly viewed by almost everybody else? Am I a fool—a romantic Quixote—or is there a constitutional defect in the American mind? Were it not for yourself and a few others, I could adopt the reveries of De Paux* as substantial truths, and could say with him that

* The Abbé de Paux, or Pauw, a distinguished scholar, born in Amsterdam. The work referred to is his "Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains." He wrote similar works on the Chinese, Egyptians, Greeks, and ancient Germans.

there is some thing in our climate which belittles every animal, human or brute.

I conjure you, my friend, make a vigorous stand for the honor of your country! Rouse all the energies of your mind, and measure swords in the Senate with the great slayer of public faith—the hackneyed veteran in the violation of public engagements. Prevent him if possible from triumphing a second time over the prostrate credit and injured interests of his country.* Unmask his false and horrid hypothesis. Display the immense difference between an able statesman and *the man of subtleties.* Root out the distempered and noisome weed which is attempted to be planted in our political garden, to choke and wither in its infancy the fair plant of public credit.

I disclose to you without reserve the state of my mind. It is discontented and gloomy in the extreme. I consider the cause of good government as having been put to an issue and the verdict rendered against it.

Introduce, I pray you, into the Senate, when the bill comes up, the clause which has been rejected, freed from embarrassment by the bills of credit, bearing interest on the nominal value. Press its adoption in this, the most unexceptionable shape, and let the *yeas* and *nays* witness the result.

Among the other reasons for this is my wish that the true friends of public credit may be distinguished from its enemies. The question is too great a one not to undergo a thorough examination before the community. It would pain me not to be able to distinguish. Adieu. God bless you!

P. S.—Do me the favor to revise carefully the course of the bill respecting the unsubscribed debt and let me know the particulars. I wish to be able to judge more particularly of the under-plot I suspect.

* Witness the forty for one scheme—a most unskilful measure, to say the best of it.

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, Feb. 26, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter with the printed bills. The new clause is an additional bad feature, yet 't is better the thing should pass as it is than not at all Every thing should be gained that can be.

So it seems that under the present administration of the department, Hillhouse* and Goodhue† are to be the ministers in the House of Representatives, and Ellsworth‡ and Strong§ in the Senate. Fine work we shall have!

But I swear the nation shall not be dishonored with impunity.‖

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

ALBANY, April 10, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote you a few lines by the last post. I sit down to fulfil my promise then made.

The fulfilment of our foreign engagements under the existing circumstances is no doubt a perplexing task. But I hope it will not be found impracticable to effect enough to preserve character and credit.

Every thing must be done to this end, though with considerable sacrifices, provided you do not go so far as to *endanger credit at home.* This must at all events be kept sound, since a shock there will be fatal, while the extraordinary situation of the times will furnish an apology for any omissions which may happen abroad; and, by eventual indemnification, the wounds which may be given to foreign credit may be healed. The opinion which some entertain

* James Hillhouse, of Connecticut.

† Benjamin Goodhue, of Massachusetts.

‡ Oliver Ellsworth, of Connecticut.

§ Caleb Strong, of Massachusetts.

‖ All the persons mentioned in this letter were staunch Federalists and warm friends of Hamilton. He wrote evidently in great but momentary irritation on account of the course of Congress as to the unsubscribed debt.

is altogether a false one—that it is more important to maintain our credit abroad than at home. The latter is far the most important nursery of resources, and, consequently, far the most important to be inviolably maintained. A failure here would be the more material, because it would argue want of means, and could not shelter itself under the plea of temporary embarrassments from external causes, and because it would derange our whole internal economy.

But, except the compromitting our whole domestic credit, nothing must be left undone to preserve external credit.

I do not doubt that the means which have been taken down to the first of June, inclusively, will be deemed adequate, considering the circumstances. They may, however, fail of the effect intended. But I do not apprehend any material evil from the delay of reimbursing the instalment of principal, if the interest is but *punctually* and honestly paid. I hope our commissioners, with the public and their own resources, will effect this, till further provision can be brought into action.

As to sending specie from this country, 't is out of the question. 'T would derange every thing, and our commissioners ought to be frankly told that it is impracticable, *owing to the interruption by the war of some of the usual channels through which we have derived our supplies of specie.*

But commodities may be remitted on the public account, and this (the resource of stock failing) must, for aught I see, be done, unless what I shall now mention can be accomplished, with the judgment of our commissioners in its favor, to wit:

Let *them* enter into an arrangement with the constituted authorities of Holland or France (preferring the former) to receive at Amsterdam the sums necessary for paying those which we shall owe, giving drafts upon our Treasury for *equivalent* sums. This will enable the French or Dutch government to obtain supplies here, which they will want.

But may they for this purpose receive and *pay* assignats? Not so, if assignats are not the general currency of the coun-

try; but if they are, there may be no choice. Gold and silver may not then be obtainable at all. Perhaps the commissioners may be able to raise funds by the sale of bills upon this country; otherwise, as many may wish, to remit from the Netherlands.

Yet our creditors must not be paid without a *reasonable indemnification* in depreciated paper. Consequently our commissioners must be authorized, if obliged to pay in assignats, to augment the rate, so as to allow an equivalent.

Accordingly, if the arrangement I have intimated can be effected, the commissioners may give bills, *florin* for *florin*, of gold or silver (or a dollar for 2½ florins); but if they are obliged to receive assignats, they ought to secure a premium of exchange equal to the depreciation.

This transaction ought to be managed under the superintendence of our minister.

What I wish you were able immediately to do is this: To ship without delay commodities sufficient, together with the moneys certainly in the command of the commissioners, independent of sales of stock, to pay *interest* to September, inclusively, writing them a letter suggesting the above plan, and authorizing them to act upon it if they approve.

The stock remitted may be ordered to be sold in England, which will furnish a fund upon which you can draw, in order to prosecute other methods of remittance.

At the same time, I think it may be well to take measures for ascertaining whether some arrangement could not be relied upon for remitting through England to Amsterdam. I know of no impediment, even now, to sending *bullion* (including Spanish and other foreign gold and silver coin) in American bottoms to Amsterdam, but impediments might arise. Perhaps in this case London might be made an intermediary of remittances to Holland, either by sales of stock or commodities there.

The commodities to be remitted ought to be such as to be liable to as little casualty as possible from war considera-

tions, and they ought to be most effectually insured, and ought to appear authentically as those of the United States sent to pay their debts on their own account and risk. I suspect, however, the *other plan* will be found practicable on satisfactory principles, but no agreement ought to be for a longer term than a year.

If you are not able to send, immediately, commodities for payment of interest to September, it may then be of necessity to wait further information, giving full latitude, if it has not already been given, to sell stock for payment of interest at any price; suggesting the possibility of doing some thing through London, and proposing the plan of the arrangement which has been suggested. All the stock not salable in Amsterdam ought to be placed in London, under due precautions for security, to be sold there as a fund.

The co-operation of our minister in Holland will be proper throughout; and pretty large discretions must be confided.

If a very trusty and a clever fellow could go from hence, as agent for the treasury, with alternative instructions according to circumstances, it might be very useful. I believe WILLIAM SMITH, of South Carolina, would go and he would be safe and competent. Would not James Watson go? He would also do.

In contemplating a possible course of things, I had my eye upon the expedient of issuing *warrants* upon the treasurer, payable at future periods, from two to twelve months, in nature of exchequer bills. This may be a means of providing for the current service by credit, besides the expedient of loans from the bank. By being negotiable, they may answer the purposes of contractors, though articles may thereby cost some thing more to the public, than on the plan of anticipated or prompt payment.

I mention this, because I foresee that, from the embarrassment of foreign events, there may be a press upon the treasury.

If any thing further occurs, you shall have it. Write me as freely as you please.

P. S.—There is one idea which may deserve attention—a depreciated paper naturally gives to gold and silver an *artificial* and *exaggerated* value. This may even occasion an undue loss to a debtor who is honorable enough to pay in gold and silver, when a depreciated paper is the general currency. This is more than just. But it may be policy in a government to submit to it. Yet there may be bounds. The idea may be brought into the view of our minister and commissioners for this purpose: To suggest, that if such an artificial advancement of gold and silver takes place, the compensation for depreciation may be adjusted upon some *equitable ratio.* But a moderate sacrifice, for simplicity of proceeding, may, in this case, be best.

I send a letter to the Attorney-General which you will read, seal, and deliver. You will easily divine my reason for addressing it to him. The President ought to view this matter as it is, but I do not write to him, because I do not wish to appear officious.

Have you taken any arrangement at Amsterdam, to facilitate the change of foreign and domestic debt, according to the law of last session? The moment is favorable. Facilities on the spot may promote the object. Our commissioners and our minister are worthy of trust.

TO RUFUS KING.

April 24, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I return you a certain draft, with a little substitute for the close of it proposed by Mr. J——, with an eye to your suggestion.

Our petition went yesterday by express. It had more than 3,200 signers, which is within about 300 of the highest poll we ever had in this city *on both sides*, at the most controverted election. Nothing can more clearly demonstrate our unanimity, and I feel no doubt of equal or greater unanimity throughout the State.

The meeting-men have not dared to publish the names of the committee, because it impudently contained a considerable proportion of persons hostile to its object, several of them actually on our petition. You see by this their embarrassment and their weakness.

TO WILLIAM BRADFORD.*

May, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Yours of the twenty-first of May, by going to Albany, did not reach me till yesterday. The expectation of Mr. Adet properly varied the course of proceeding. I am glad the impression with you corresponded with mine.

If Mr. Randolph showed Fauchet any part of the instructions to Mr. Jay, I do not much regret that he manifests displeasure at the withholding of a part. When shall we cease to consider ourselves as a colony of France? To assure her minister that the instructions to Mr. Jay contained nothing which could interfere with our engagements to France might, under all the circumstances, have been expedient; but to communicate specifically any part of the instructions to our envoy, was, in my judgment, improper in principle and precedent.

I expect the treaty will labor. It contains many good things, but there is one ingredient in it which displeases me —of a commercial complexion. I am, however, of opinion, on mature reflection, that it is expedient to ratify, accompanied by a declaration that it is our intention, till there be a further explanation and modification of the article, to forbear the exercise of a certain privilege, and consequently the performance of the condition of it, or some thing equivalent. This, it is true, may or may not be accepted. But I believe

* William Bradford, of Pennsylvania, at this time Attorney-General of the United States. He had been a soldier of the Revolution and a judge and Attorney-General of Pennsylvania. He was a man of ability and character, and his premature death shortly after the date of this letter, on August 23, 1795, was deeply regretted,

it will create no difficulty, and I would rather risk it than take the treaty unqualifiedly. I prefer this course to that of sending back the treaty for a new negotiation, because (among other reasons) it may save time, and more speedily close certain matters which I deem it very important to terminate. I am also glad to learn that, since the date of your letter, there have been some convictions of the insurgents. This was very essential to the permanent good effects of the measures which were pursued on that subject. You see, I have not entirely lost my appetite for a little politics; you must not infer that I have not a very good one for law.

P. S.—I had almost forgotten a principal object of this letter. It concerns the Marquis Lafayette. In conversation, I think, but certainly by letter (this *entre nous*), I suggested to Mr. Jay that, in case the treaty with Great Britain turned favorably, it will be well to hint to the British minister that the United States took a very particular interest in the welfare of Lafayette, and that the good offices of that country, to procure his liberation, would be regarded as a valuable mark of friendship. I believe I also had some conversation, in the same spirit, either with the President or the Secretary of State; but I do not remember if any thing was done. If the thing has not been tried, and if the treaty is ratified, will it not be advisable to instruct the person who is to exchange it, to accompany it with an observation of the above import? The moment will be a favorable one—and I imagine the time is fast approaching when Lafayette will recover his popularity in his own country. The chief thing against this is the rivalship of those who hold the power. But will they not be glad to consolidate their general plan by weight of a man who, with all parties, has maintained the character of well-intentioned, and who probably has the good-will of the multitude, spite of all that has passed. I see no inconvenience in your taking occasion to ask Mr. Jay if the Marquis Lafayette was ever the subject of conversation between him and the British ministry, and

how it terminated. And I will thank you, if you feel yourself at liberty, to let me know whether any thing like the step I have suggested obtains.*

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, June 11, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your letter of the 10th. The case has been with me as with you. Reflection has not mitigated the exceptionable point. Yet it will be to be lamented, if no mode can be devised to save the main object and close the irritable questions which are provided for. Every thing besides an absolute and simple ratification will put some thing in jeopardy. But while, on the one hand, I think it advisable to hazard as little as possible, on the other, I should be willing to hazard some thing, and unwilling to see a very objectionable principle put into activity.

It is to be observed that no time is fixed for the ratification of the treaty. It may then be ratified with a collateral instruction to make a declaration, that the United States considers the article in question, aggregately taken, as intended by the king of Great Britain as a privilege; that they conceive it for their interest to forbear the exercise of that privilege, with the condition annexed to it, till an explanation in order to a new modification of it shall place it on a more acceptable footing, or till an article to be sent to our minister containing that modification shall be agreed upon between him and the British court as a part of the treaty—the ratification not to be exchanged without further instruction from this country, unless accepted in this sense and with this qualification.

This course appears to me preferable to sending back the treaty to open the negotiation anew, because it may save time on the points most interesting to us, and I do not see

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., 216.

that if the ratifications be exchanged with this saving, there can be any doubt of the matter operating as intended. Adieu.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, June 13, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter from New York, after a circuit by Albany, found me here.

I forgot to observe to you in my last, that unless there were objections to it which did not occur to me, it appeared advisable, if not done, to institute at Amsterdam a plan for subscribing the Dutch and Antwerp debt. It may be conducted under the management of our commissioners with the superintendence of our minister. In all such cases a considerable deal depends on facilities on the *very spot*, and the moment seems particularly favorable.

P. S.—I will willingly testify what you mention respecting Mr. Cabot,* but having torn up your letter, trusting to my memory, it has left me in the lurch, and I do not know where Cabot is, whether here or in Europe. What prospects *as to the treaty?* †

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, June 20, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

A considerable alarm has been spread this morning by a report that the treaty had been disagreed to. I have assured those I have seen that I was convinced any rumor of a decision must be premature. The anxiety, however, about the result is extreme. The common opinion among men of

* George Cabot, senator from Massachusetts, an intimate friend of Hamilton and Wolcott. It is impossible now to tell the meaning of the reference here made to him.

† Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society. I owe this and other letters from the same source to the kindness of the Hon. J. Hammond Trumbull, of Hartford.

business of all descriptions is that a disagreement to the treaty would greatly shock and stagnate pecuniary plans and operations in general. This is not a small source of disquietude. Others, who are not likely to be affected in that sense (and among these myself), look forward to the result with great solicitude, as fixing or endangering the stability of our present beneficial and desirable situation.

My influence in seconding the wishes of our friend General Greene is, I fear, overrated. Unwilling to raise expectation which may not be realized, I will only say that it will give me real pleasure to be able to promote his accommodation or advantage, as my opinion of him entirely corresponds with yours. In the meantime I will, as far as circumstances permit, have an eye to the affair.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, June 22, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 18th instant. I will reply to one or two points now, and to the rest hereafter.

With regard to the measure of receiving Dutch bonds here to be exchanged, as is usual, it has different sides. To do it may be, in some measure, necessary to effectuate the main object, as there may be many individuals who, from circumstances, might not think themselves safe in employing the mode which has been adopted, and which is no doubt proper. Yet it is easy to see it might be attended with hazard of imposition. But some thing may depend on the nature of the checks which the course of the business originally gives to our agents at Amsterdam. If similitude of handwriting is the only internal check, perhaps it may be possible to manage the matter here. A conversation with Cazenove may furnish you with the requisite data. Yet I feel great doubts of the safety of the operation, and, if adopted at all, it ought to be upon condition that no definitive or *alienable* evidences are to be given in exchange for the original bonds till after a period (to be named) long

enough to receive at the treasury the result of the operation in Holland, and a particular and detailed statement of it; and that no interest be payable (in the meantime) without a guaranty for repayment. With these checks none but respectable men will come forward, and there may be little or no risk. Yet, as I intimated, even the expediency of this depends on the nature of the original checks, and it ought to be announced that the treasury reserves to itself entire discretion as to the admission or non-admission of the bonds presented here.

With regard to the contract proposed by Mr. Swan, I answer, that I doubt much the advisability of concluding any thing with him here, for being concluded, it must be relied upon as a *primary* resource with the auxiliary and *contingent* expedient of drawing in case of failure; and Mr. Swan is not of standing, or character, to justify the leaving the public credit to depend primarily upon his punctuality. If Mr. Swan is able to do what he offers, it must be on the basis of French government funds, or that of a powerful moneyed combination in Europe. If either, why cannot he be referred to our commissioners and *minister*, under letters from the treasury stating the offer, the desirableness that such a contract could be formed under adequate guards for its performance, and leaving it to them to judge of the adequateness of the guards which shall be proposed? It appears to me very material that they should be satisfied with the arrangement, and essential that there should be good security and known resources for the execution of it.

Else no loss on shipping commodities, or otherwise, for the short time it can last, will counterpoise the risk of disappointment and censure of reliance on an incompetent character.

I will barely observe on one point of the latter part of your letter, namely, the payment of interest under the direction of the commissioners of the sinking fund. I have not the act by me, and can only speak from memory; but I am persuaded it does not require it. I am sure it will be highly

inexpedient to place any *extra clogs* on that operation, and I do not perceive why the manner of keeping the accounts may not obviate any embarrassment from a separate management of the two things. I will write again more particularly, on this as well as on other points. I am glad to know that there is a probability of a proper issue to the affair of the treaty.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, June 26, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have direct information, in confidence, that the minister of France, by a letter received yesterday, has ordered a *fast-sailing vessel* for France to be prepared at this port. No doubt this has connection with the treaty with England. I presume, with the reserves that decorum requires, he is apprised of the contents of that treaty. This ought, at least, to go so far as to satisfy him that there is nothing in it inimical to his country, especially as I suppose it to have been adopted. It is well to guard our peace on all sides, as far as shall consist with dignity.

Indeed, I am of opinion, on the whole, that all further mystery at present is unnecessary, and ought to be waived, for the satisfaction of the public mind. I do not think any scruples of diplomatic decorum of weight enough to stand in the way.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, June 30, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Doctor Livingston some time since left with me a bundle of vouchers relating to the questions between Phil. Livingston's estate and the public. There was, among other things, a little register or book with a marble cover, doubled up. I do not find it among my papers, and if my memory does not deceive me it was sent, on breaking up at Philadelphia, to one of the officers of the treasury. Mr. Jones

may know some thing of it. It is interesting to the estate. Let a careful search be made, and when found let it be forwarded by a careful hand to me.

P. S.—I find the non-publication of the treaty is working as I expected—that is, giving much scope to misrepresentation and misapprehension. The Senate, I am informed by several members, did not take any step towards publication, because they thought it the affair of the President to do as he thought fit.*

TO ROBERT TROUP.†

NEW YORK, July 25, 1795.

MY DEAR TROUP:

Confiding in your integrity and friendship to me, I have made you executor of my will. My concerns are not very extensive and of course will not give you much trouble. Indeed, I might have dispensed with the ceremony of making a will as to what I may myself leave, had I not wished that my little property may be applied as readily and as fairly as may be to the benefit of my few creditors. For after a life of labor I leave my family to the benevolence of others, if my course shall happen to be terminated here.

My property will appear on the list herewith marked A.

My creditors are John Barker Church,‡ to whom I owe about five thousand pounds, as will appear by account marked B.

The Office of Discount and Deposit, New York, who hold a note of mine for five hundred dollars endorsed by Nicholas Fish. The holders, unknown, of two drafts drawn upon me by my father, one for five hundred, the other for two hundred, dollars. Mr. Meade, to whom Ceracchi gave a bill

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

† Robert Troup, of New York, a gallant officer in the war for independence. He was a successful lawyer, a United States district judge, and one of Hamilton's closest friends.

‡ His brother-in-law.

on me for six hundred and odd dollars, which I told Mr. Ludlow it was my intention to pay.

Mr. Sheaf, of Philadelphia, wine merchant, to whom I owe a balance of account not very considerable. Gaspard Joseph Armand Ducher, who has my bond in duplicate for £698 principal, being for money which he left in my hands when he went to France, having no better disposition of it. This, being a bond debt, will claim a preference, and from the nature of it I am glad of it.

Arthur Noble, Esquire, who has my bond for the fourth part of the lands purchased of him in company with yourself, Lawrence, and Fish. The lands themselves will be a fund for the payment of these bonds. I hope the poor fellow may be alive. He was a member of the convention.

I have left in the hands of Col. Fish the obligations mentioned in the list of Cortland and of Wickham & Thompson, to secure him in this mere act of friendship from the possibility of loss, and to accelerate his reimbursement.

I hesitated whether I would not also secure a preference to the drafts of my father, but these, as far as I am concerned, being a voluntary engagement, I doubted the justice of the measure, and I have done nothing. I regret it, lest they should return upon him and increase his distress. Though, as I am informed, a man of respectable connections in Scotland,* he became, as a merchant, bankrupt at an early day in the West Indies and is now in indigence. I have pressed him to come to me, but his great age and infirmity have deterred him from the change of climate.

I hope what I leave may prove equal to my debts. If it does not, I have the consolation of hoping that the loss will be permitted by himself to fall upon my brother-in-law, Mr. Church, whose friendship and generosity I do not doubt.

I regret that his affairs as well as my own have suffered by my devotion to the public service. But I trust, upon the

* When Hamilton speaks in this way of his father, it is not surprising that so much mystery should overhang his birth and parentage.

whole, that the few operations I have made for him will more than recompense him for my omissions, though they will not have been as profitable to him as they ought to have been, and as they would have been if I could have paid more attention.

Purchases of lands have been made for Mr. Church, first, in Pennsylvania, in company with Tench Coxe, to whom I advanced ten thousand dollars; second, in this City of New York, in company with J. Lawrence, to whom I have advanced the sums mentioned in the account marked C, in bundle AA. Besides these advances, I have put into his hands a draft of Fitsimmons upon Constable, accepted by the latter, for four thousand dollars, and a set of bills for five hundred pounds sterling, received from Robert Morris, drawn by Harrison & Sherret upon the house of Cazenove & Co., London. These are all on the same account of the purchases.

You will find, in the bundle marked AB, a smaller bundle marked D, which will explain the nature and state of the business with Mr. Coxe, by which also you will see that Mr. Anthony, who is a very good man, is my agent in that affair.

You will also find in bundle AA a note of Mr. Morris for nine thousand five hundred dollars, on account of which the above bills are. This note was for money lent belonging to Mr. Church. Mr. Morris will not dispute that it bears interest from the date. Indeed, the real sum was ten thousand dollars, but Mr. Morris after some time paid me five hundred. The interest ought to be calculated accordingly. Mr. Morris can furnish the data.

As this money was thus disposed of without being warranted by the spirit of Mr. Church's instructions, I considered myself as responsible for it. And I trust that Mr. Morris will exert himself to pay the balance speedily, to be applied to the investments which Mr. Lawrence is making.

I have reccived some large fees for which the parties could not have had equivalents: from Williamson, one

hundred pounds; from Constable, one hundred pounds; from Macombe, one hundred pounds; from Mr. Bayard, on behalf of Wilken and Jared Willink, one hundred pounds. It would be just, if there were means, that they should be repaid. But what can I direct who am, I fear, insolvent?

God bless you, my friend. Be assured always of the attachment of, etc.

P. S.—I remitted Sheaf, on my way through Jersey, an order on the Bank of the United States for a good part of his demand. This will appear by my bank account.

In my leather trunk, where the bundles above mentioned are, is also a bundle I. R. inscribed thus:

To be forwarded to Oliver Wolcott, Jun., Esqr.

I entreat that this may be early done by a careful hand. This trunk contains all my interesting papers.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, July 28, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

We have some cause to suspect, though not enough to believe, that our Jacobins meditate serious mischief to certain individuals. It happens that the militia of this city, from the complexion of its officers in general, cannot be depended on, and it will be difficult for some time to organize a competent armed substitute. In this situation our eyes turn as a resource in a sudden emergency, upon the military now in the forts, but these, we are told, are under marching orders. Pray converse confidentially with the Secretary of War, and engage him to suspend the march. Matters in eight or ten days will explain themselves.

How are things truly in Philadelphia? I have good reason to believe that the President, before he left Philadelphia, had

* This long and interesting letter is now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department. It furnishes a striking commentary on the charges of corruption made against Hamilton by Jefferson and his tools, and on Madisor's cold sneer that Hamilton retired from office alleging poverty as the cause.

concluded to ratify the treaty according to the advice of the Senate. Has any thing finally been done, or are we where we were?

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, August 5, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have received yours of the 3d instant. You make no mention of having received one from me, enclosing another for the Attorney-General, in which I tell him that I will attend the cause which involves the question respecting direct taxes when notified of the time it will come on.

The silence of your letter makes me fear it may have miscarried.

I do not wonder at what you tell me of the author of a certain piece.* That man is too cunning to be wise. I have been so much in the habit of seeing him mistaken, that I hold his opinion cheap.†

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, August 10, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter by Saturday's post. The one you enquire about was received.

I incline very much to the opinion that this will be the proper course of conduct in reference to the order to seize our vessels with provisions—viz., to send to our agent the treaty ratified as advised by the Senate, with this instruction: that if the order for seizing provisions is in force when he receives it, he is to inform the British ministry that he has the treaty ratified, but that he is instructed not to exchange the ratification till that order is rescinded, since the

* Note by Oliver Wolcott: "Tench Coxe, author of a piece signed *Juriscola*." Tench Coxe was commissioner of revenue, and, as has appeared above, had already made charges against and attempted to injure both Hamilton and Wolcott.

† Now first printed from the Wolcott papers, in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

United States cannot ever give an implied sanction to the principle. At the same time a remonstrance ought to go from this country, well considered and well digested, *even to a word*, to be delivered against the principle of the order.

My reasons for this opinion are summarily these:

Firstly.—That in fact we are too much interested in the exemption of provisions from seizure to give even an implied sanction to the contrary pretensions.

Secondly.—That the exchange of ratifications pending such an order would give color to an abusive construction of the eighteenth article of the treaty, as though it admitted of the seizure of provisions.

Thirdly.—That this would give *cause* of umbrage to France, because it would be more than merely to refrain from resisting by force an innovation injurious to her, but it would be to give a sanction to it in the midst of a war.

Fourthly.—It would be thus construed in our country, and would destroy confidence in the government.

Fifthly.—It would scarcely be reputable to a nation to conduct a treaty with a Power to heal past controversies, at the very moment of a new and existing violation of its rights.

P. S.—Deliver the enclosed as soon as it gets to hand. If an order has existed, and has been rescinded, the remonstrance ought still to be presented, after the exchange of ratifications, as a protest against the principle, etc.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Sept. 20, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

A slight indisposition prevented my meeting you at E. Town, which I should otherwise have done with great pleasure.

It is wished for a particular purpose to know who are the writers of *Valerius*, *Hancock*, *Belisarius*, *Atticus*. If any thing about them is known in a manner that can be depended upon, I will thank you for it in confidence.

The fever in this town has become serious. The alarm, however, exceeds the quantum of disease and danger. It is not ascertained that the fever is contagious. It is clearly traced to local causes, but it is sufficiently mortal. Bleeding is found fatal. Most of our physicians purge more or less, some with calomel, I fear more than does good; bark, wine, etc., plentifully used, and with good effect. They, however, all behave well, and shrink not from their duty.

Show the last paragraph of this letter to Doctor Stevens, from whom, though I have written to him, I have not received a line since I came to New York.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Oct. 3, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the ——, and thank you for the information. As to Randolph, I shall be surprised at nothing, but if the facts come out, his personal influence is at all events damned. No coloring will remove unfavorable impressions. To do mischief, he must work in the dark.

What you say respecting your own department disquiets me, for I think we shall, for the present, weather all storms but those from real deficiencies in our public arrangements. Not knowing details, I can attempt to suggest nothing, except the general observation, that if the means heretofore provided, are seriously likely to prove inadequate, Congress ought to be explicitly told so, in order to a further provision. It was a maxim in my mind, that executive arrangements should not fail for want of full disclosure to the Legislature. Then, if adequate provision be not made, the responsibility is theirs. The worst evil we can struggle with is inefficiency in the measures of government.

If I remember right, it never appeared that Fauchet had any power to make a commercial treaty with us, and the

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers, in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

late Attorney-General (Bradford) informed me that *Adet* had power only *to treat*, none *to conclude*. How are these things? I ask for special reasons.*

What is the object of the dispatch-boat from France? Nothing menacing, I hope.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Oct. 3, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 6th instant.

I am of opinion that the commissioners to be appointed under the seventh article are competent to grant relief, in all cases of captures and condemnations of our property, during the present war, and antecedent to the treaty, which were *contrary to the laws of nations*, and in which there is *adequate evidence* (of which they are to judge *bona fide*), that compensation could not, at the time of the treaty, for *whatever reason*, be actually obtained. I think their power competent to relief, *after* a decision, *in the last resort;* that is, by the Lords Commissioners of Appeals, and if the proper steps have been taken to ascertain that justice cannot be had, in the ordinary course of justice, *before* and *without* such decision.

This opinion is founded upon the following reasons:

Firstly.—The subject of complaint to be redressed is *irregular* or *illegal* captures or *condemnations*. The word "condemnations" is general. It is not restricted to condemnations in the inferior courts, or in the final Court of

* Col. Pickering writes Wolcott in reference to the above:

"October 6, 1795.

"DEAR SIR:—Mr. Taylor informs me that Mr. Fauchet never to his knowledge made even any overtures relative to a treaty of any kind. I have cast my eye over those of Mr. Adet, by which it appears, that he is authorized to digest with the American Government a new treaty of commerce and a new consular convention, but not to conclude any thing. Mr. Randolph agreed to meet him on this ground. If the articles digested should meet the approbation of the respective governments, they might give full powers to constitute of these articles the proposed new treaties. Sincerely yours, T. PICKERING."

Appeals. It may then apply to either. Condemnation *in the last resort* may have been had prior to the treaty. There being no restriction, they, like those in inferior tribunals, were equally within the terms of complaint. But could they be *illegal?* Yes, in controversies between nations, respecting the application of the rules of the laws of nations, decisions of the highest court of one of the parties, if contrary to those rules, are illegal. In other words, they are contrary to that law, which is the standard of legality and illegality between nations; and, if manifestly so, are a cause of war. Moreover, this rule of legality or illegality, is recognized by the article itself, in that part which authorizes the commissioners to decide according to the merits of the several cases, to justice, equity, *and the laws of nations.*

Secondly.—The article contemplates that "*various circumstances*" may obstruct compensation in the ordinary course of justice. These terms would not be fully satisfied by tying the article down, as has been attempted, to cases of insolvency and absconding.

Thirdly.—The article expressly declares, that when compensation cannot, "*for whatever reason,*" be had in the ordinary course of justice, it shall be made by the British Government upon the award of the commissioners. It is inadmissible to narrow down these very comprehensive terms to the two cases of *insolvency* or *absconding.* They are commensurate with every cause of irregularity or illegality, pronounced such by the laws of nations. The exceptions of manifest delay, or negligence, or wilful omission, confirm the extensive interpretation.

Fourthly.—The commissioners are not restricted in the description of cases they are to take up; and they are to decide them according to their *merits,* to *justice, equity,* and the *laws of nations.* These terms are as latitudinary as they could be made. They seemed formed on purpose to overrule any technical difficulties, with regard to local tribunals, or positive rules of decision in those tribunals.

Fifthly.—The nature of the circumstance which led to the

article, and which involved a controversy between the two nations, respecting the rules of the laws of nations, as well as the application of those rules. The natural presumption is that it was meant to refer this controversy, in all its latitude, to the extraordinary tribunal created; to transfer the right of judgment of each nation, which, being exercised differently, might have ended in war, to that tribunal. Any thing less than this would be inadequate to the origin of the business, to the solemnity of the provision, or to the views which, from the facts, must be conceived to have governed the parties.

All this appears so clear to me that I confess I am confounded at an opinion which I have seen of Messrs. Lewis and Rawle. They seem to pare away the object of the articles to the two cases mentioned above, founding their opinion upon the maxim that the courts of the belligerent power are the competent tribunals to decide similar questions between that power and a neutral nation.

This maxim is true, but how can it be deemed to apply to the instance of a controversy between two nations about the interpretation of the laws of nations, and about the decisions of courts founded upon an interpretation concerning which they disagreed? And this when an extraordinary tribunal has been constituted by the joint acts of the two parties, to decide their differences plainly as a substitute for a controversy by arms? Is not the constitution of such a tribunal by the two parties a manifest abandonment of the pretension of one to administer justice definitely through its tribunals? How can it be presumed, after such a proceeding, that the neutral power meant to be concluded by the decisions of those tribunals? Is not the reverse the obvious presumption? Why else was it not left to the British Courts of Admiralty to liquidate the damages in the admitted cases of insolvency and absconding to be paid by the government? These circumstances could call for a substitute only in the *person to pay*, not in the person, or tribunal, *which was to liquidate*. There was no need, on the

principle set up, for an extraordinary tribunal to liquidate and award damages.

I confess that the opinion referred to appears to me destitute of color; contrary to the antecedent course of the transaction, contrary to the positive expressions of the article, and to what can reasonably be presumed to be the intention of the parties. It fritters away to nothing a very solemn and important act between two contending nations.

The exception of the cases in which justice might be obtained, in the ordinary course, appears to me to decide nothing. It might be unobtainable in that course as well from the obstructions of positive regulations of the belligerent parties controlling the courts, and from false principles adopted by the courts, as from the inability or default of the captors. The commissioners, who are the *court of the two nations*, are to pronounce whether justice is unobtainable in the ordinary course for any of these reasons. As the tribunals of both parties, they are necessarily superior to the tribunals of either. And they are the judges, in their own way, and upon their own grounds, of the question whether and when justice can or cannot be obtained in the ordinary course.

But they ought to exercise their discretion reasonably—not to abuse it, otherwise they may release the party injured from the obligation to perform.

Hence, though it is not necessary that every *individual case* of capture should be prosecuted to a decision *in the last resort*, it appears to me proper that, by such prosecution of some *one case* of the several classes of cases, it may be ascertained, by a final decision on the principle of each class, that redress cannot be obtained. Else the commissioners may object that there has been a neglect to procure for them satisfactory evidence; that justice could not be had in the ordinary course.

I would advise, then, that our agent be instructed to lay all the cases, with the evidence, before our counsel, and to desire them to make a selection of one of each class in

which a defence can be made with probability of success, on some difference of principle; to have these cases prosecuted to an ultimate decision, and to leave all the rest pending, if possible, undecided in a course of appeal. This will give reasonable evidence to the commissioners, strengthened, in view of those appointed by the other party, by the character of our counsel, who, I learn, are every way men of respectability.

The other points in your letter I shall pursue hereafter.

P. S.—In a consultation on an insurance case between our district attorney, Mr. Burr, B. Livingston, and myself, the above points incidentally occurred, and I understood all these gentlemen as agreeing in the opinion I have stated. You are at liberty to communicate this to Mr. Pickering.

TO WASHINGTON.

SIR: NEW YORK, Oct. 16, 1795.

About a fortnight since arrived here Mr. Frestel, with G. W. Fayette, the son of the marquis. The former, who is in capacity of tutor to the latter, requested me to mention their arrival to you, and that they meant to retire to some place in the neighboring country until they should receive some direction from you. Thus, at least, I understood him, and accordingly they are gone to a house between Hackensack and Ramapo, in the Jerseys, to which may be conveyed any letter you may confide to me for them. They are *incog.*

Having been informed you were speedily expected from Philadelphia, and being oppressed with occupation, I delayed writing till this time.

Mr. Frestel, who appears a very sedate, discreet man, informs me that they left France with permission, though not in their real characters, but in fact with the privity of some members of the Committee of Safety who were disposed to shut their eyes and facilitate their departure.

The young Fayette also appears to me very advanta-

geously modest, of very good manners, and expressing himself with intelligence and propriety.

Shall I trespass on your indulgence by hazarding a sentiment upon the subject of this young gentleman? If I do, let it be ascribed to the double interest I take in a son of the marquis, and in whatever interests the good fame and satisfaction of him to whom I write.

On mature reflection, and on sounding opinions as far as opportunity and the nature of the case have permitted, I fully believe that the President need be under no embarrassment as to any good offices his heart may lead him to perform towards this young man. It will not, I am persuaded, displease those in possession of the power of the country from which he comes, and in ours it will be singularly and, generally grateful. I am even convinced that the personal and political enemies of the President would be gratified, should his ideas of the policy of the case restrain him from that conduct which his friendship to the marquis and his feelings otherwise would dictate. The youth of this person, joined to the standing of his father, make the way easy.

I even venture to think it possible that the time is not very remote when the marquis will again recover the confidence and esteem of his country, when perhaps the men in power may be glad to glorify themselves and their cause with his alliance. This, however, is supposition, merely to be indulged as a reflection, not to be counted upon as a fact.

There is another subject upon which I will hazard a few words. It is that of Mr. Randolph. I have seen the intercepted letter, which, I presume, led to his resignation. I read it with regret, but without much surprise, for I never had any confidence in Mr. Randolph, and I thought there were very suspicious appearances about him on the occasion to which the letter particularly refers.

I perceive that, rendered desperate, he meditates as much mischief as he can. The letter he calls for, I presume, is that above alluded to. His object is, if he obtains it, to prejudice others; if any part is kept back, to derive ad-

vantage to his cause from the idea that there may be some thing reserved which would tend to his exculpation, and to produce the suspicion that there is some thing which you are interested to keep from the light.

Though, from the state of public prejudices, I shall probably for one be a sufferer by the publication; yet, upon the whole, I incline to the opinion that it is most advisable the whole should come before the public. I acknowledge that I do not express this opinion without hesitation, and therefore it will deserve, as it will no doubt engage, your mature reflection; but such is the present bias of my judgment. I am the more inclined to the opinion, as I presume that the subject being in part before the public, the whole letter will finally come out through the quarter by which it was written, and then it would have additional weight to produce ill impressions.

With great respect and affectionate attachment, I have the honor to be, etc.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Oct. 26, 1795.

SIR:

I have noticed a piece in the *Aurora*, under the signature of the "Calm Observer," which I think requires explanation, and I mean to give one with my name.* I have written to Mr. Wolcott for materials from the books of the treasury.

Should you think it proper to meet the vile insinuation in the close of it, by furnishing for one year the account of expenditure of the salary, I will with pleasure add what may be proper on that point. If there be any such account signed by Mr. Lear, it may be useful.

I wrote to you some days since, directed to you at Philadelphia, chiefly on the subject of young La Fayette. I mention it merely that you may have knowledge that there is such a letter, in case it has not yet come to hand.

* This reply was duly published. See above "The Explanation," vol. vii., p. 81.

I touched in it upon a certain *intercepted* letter. The more I have reflected, the more I am of opinion that it is advisable the whole should speedily appear.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Oct. 26, 1795.

I have observed in the *Aurora*, a piece under the signature of "A Calm Observer," which I think merits attention. It is my design to reply to it, with my name, but for this I wish to be furnished, *as soon as possible*, with the account of the President, and of the appropriations for him, as it stands in the Secretary's office, the Comptroller's, and the account rendered to Congress, and also the account of appropriations for this object. Of one point I am sure—that we never exceeded the *appropriations*, though we may have anticipated the *service*. Add any remarks you may judge useful. The sooner the better.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Oct. 27, 1795.

I wish the statements requested in my letter of yesterday may contain each particular payment, not aggregates for periods. It runs in my mind that once, there being no appropriation, I procured an informal advance for the President from the bank. If this is so, let me know the time and particulars. If the account has been wound up to an exact adjustment, since the period noticed by the "Calm Observer," it may be useful to carry it down to that period.

I should like to have a note of other instances of advances on account of salaries.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Oct. 30, 1795.

I wrote you yesterday for a statement of the advances and appropriations for the Department of State.

I am very anxious that *Fauchet's* whole letter should ap-

pear just as it is. Strange whispers are in circulation of a nature foreign to truth, and implicating honest men with rascals. Is it to come out? Can't you send me a copy? I will observe any condition you annex.

The secret journals, and other files of the Department of State, will disclose the following facts:

That during the war a commission to negotiate a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, was given to Mr. Adams, and afterwards revoked.

That our commissioners for making peace were instructed to take no step whatever, without a previous consultation with the French ministry, though there was at that time reason to believe that France wished us to make peace, or truce, with Great Britain, without an acknowledgment of our independence, that she favored a sacrifice to Spain of our pretensions to the navigation of the Mississippi, and the relinquishment of a participation in the fisheries.

It will appear that instructions were actually given to Mr. Jay to yield the navigation of the Mississippi to Spain, in consideration of an acknowledgment of our independence; that Mr. Jay made a proposal accordingly, but clogged with some condition or qualification to bring it back to Congress before a final conclusion, and expostulated with Congress against the measure.

It will appear that this was effected by a Southern party, who would also have excluded the fisheries from being an ultimatum, in which they were opposed by the North, who equally contended for Mississippi and fisheries.

It will appear that Chancellor Livingston, as Secretary of State, reported a censure on our commissioners for breaking their instructions in the negotiations for peace.

It will appear that shortly after the arrival in this country of the preliminary articles, I made a motion in Congress to renew the commission to negotiate a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, that a committee was appointed to prepare one, with instructions, of which Mr. Madison was one, and that the committee never reported.

Thus stand the facts in my memory.

It is very desirable, now that a free access to the files of the department can give the evidence, to examine them accurately; noting times, places, circumstances, actors, etc. I want this very much for a public use, in my opinion essential.

It would also be useful to have a copy of Mr. Jefferson's letter to Congress concerning the transfer of the French debt to private money-lenders, on which the report of the Board of Treasury is founded.

Nov. 12th. This letter, by accident, has lain in my desk since it was written. I send it still. Bache's paper of the eleventh has a VALERIUS, which I think gives an opportunity of oversetting him. The leading ideas may be:

Firstly.—He discloses the object of the party to place Mr. Jefferson in contrast with the President.

Secondly.—He discloses the further object—an intimate and close alliance with France—to subject us to the vortex of European politics, and attributes it to Mr. Jefferson.

Thirdly.—He misrepresents totally Mr. Jefferson's returning from France.

A solid answer to this paper, *with facts*, would do great good.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Nov. 5, 1795.

SIR:

I received on the second instant your two letters of the 29th of October with the enclosures. An answer has been delayed to ascertain the disposition of Mr. King, who, through the summer, has resided in the country, and is only occasionally in town. I am now able to inform you *he would not accept.* Circumstances of the moment conspire with the disgust which a virtuous and independent mind feels at placing itself *en but* to the foul and venomous shafts of calumny which are continually shot by an odious confederacy against virtue, to give Mr. King a decided disinclination to the office.

I wish, sir, I could present to you any useful ideas as a substitute; but the embarrassment is extreme as to the Secretary of State. An Attorney-General, I believe, may easily be fixed upon by a satisfactory choice. Either Mr. *Dexter* or Mr. *Gore* would answer. They are both men of undoubted probity. Mr. Dexter has most *natural* talent, and is strong in his particular profession. Mr. Gore, I believe, is equally considered in his profession, and has more various information. No good man doubts Mr. Gore's purity, but he has made money by agencies for British houses in the recovery of debts, etc., and by operations in the funds, which a certain party object to him. I believe Mr. Dexter is free from every thing of this kind. Mr. King thinks *Gore* on the whole preferable. I hesitate between them. Either will, I think, be a good appointment.

But for a Secretary of State, I know not what to say. *Smith*, though not of full size, is very respectable for talent, and has pretty various information. I think he has more *real talent* than the last incumbent of the office. But there are strong objections to his appointment. I fear he is of an uncomfortable temper. He is popular with no description of men, from a certain *hardness* of character; and he, more than most other men, is considered as tinctured with prejudices towards the British. In this particular his ground is somewhat peculiar. It may suit party views to say much of other men, but more in this respect is *believed* with regard to Smith. I speak merely as to *bias* and *prejudice*. There are things, and important things, for which I would recommend Smith—thinking well of his abilities, information, industry, and integrity; but, at the present juncture, I believe his appointment to the office in question would be unadvisable.

Besides, it is very important that he should not now be removed from the House of Representatives.

I have conferred with Mr. King with respect to Mr. Potts. We both think well of his principles and consider him as a

man of good sense. But he is of a cast of character ill-suited to such an appointment, and is not *extensive* either as to talents or information. It is also a serious question whether the Senate at this time ought to be weakened.

Mr. Innis, I fear, is too absolutely lazy for Secretary of State. The objection would weigh less as Attorney-General.

The following characters, in the narrowness of the *probable* circle as to willingness, have occurred to me. Judge Pendleton, of Georgia; Mr. Desaussure (late Director of the Mint), of South Carolina; Governor Lee, or Mr. Lee, late Collector of Alexandria, of Virginia; McHenry, of Maryland—*I mean the Doctor.*

Judge Pendleton writes well, is of respectable abilities, and a gentleman-like, smooth man. If I were sure of his political views, I should be much disposed to adopt his appointment under the circumstances, but I fear he has been somewhat tainted with the prejudices of Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, and I have afflicting suspicions concerning these men. Desaussure, I believe, has considerable talents, is of gentleman-like manners, good views, and only wants sufficient standing to put him upon a footing with any attainable man.

Governor Lee* has several things for him and several against him. He ought to have a good secretary under him. His brother I only know enough of to think him worth considering.

McHenry you know. He would give no strength to the administration, but he would not disgrace the office. His views are good. Perhaps his health, etc., would prevent his accepting.

I do not know Judge Bee. I have barely thought of him.

In fact, a first-rate character is not attainable. A second-rate must be taken with good dispositions and barely decent qualifications. I wish I could throw more light. 'T is a sad omen for the government.

* "Light-Horse Harry," of Virginia.

By the fifteenth I will carefully attend to the other parts of your letters. I regret that bad health and a pressure of avocations will permit nothing earlier.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Nov. 19, 1795.

SIR:

Your letters of the 16th and 18th instant, with the enclosures, are received.

An extraordinary pressure of professional business has delayed my reply on the subject of young La Fayette, in which another cause co-operated. I wished, without unveiling the motives incidentally, to sound the impressions of other persons of judgment, who, I know, had been apprised of his being in the country.

The bias of my inclination has been that you should proceed as your letter of yesterday proposes, and I cannot say it is changed, though it is weakened. For I find that in other minds, and judicious ones, a doubt is entertained, whether at the actual crisis it would be prudent to give *publicity* to your protection of him. It seems to be feared that the factious might use it as a weapon to represent you as a favorer of the anti-revolutionists of France; and it is inferred that it would be inexpedient to furnish at this moment any aliment to their slanders.

These ideas have enough of foundation and importance to make me question my own impressions, which, from natural disposition, are in similar cases much to be distrusted.

I shall therefore do nothing more at present than write to La Fayette and his preceptor to come to New York, and I shall forbear any definite communication to them till I hear further from you, after you have reflected on the information I now give.

Should you on reconsideration conclude on yielding to the doubt as a matter of greater caution, perhaps it will be then left for you to write to La Fayette a letter, affectionate as your feelings will naturally lead you to make it, an-

nouncing your resolution to be to him a parent and friend, but mentioning that very peculiar circumstances of the moment impose on you the necessity of deferring the gratification of your wishes for a personal interview, desiring him at the same time to concert with me a plan of disposing of himself satisfactorily and advantageously in the meantime. I shall with pleasure execute any commands you may give me on the subject. The papers respecting this matter are herewith returned. I shall without delay attend to all the others.

TO PICKERING.

MY DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Nov. 20, 1795.

I duly received your letter of the 17th, which needed no apology as it will always give me pleasure to comply with any wish of yours connected with the public service, or your personal satisfaction.

Good men, in the idea of your appointment to the office of Secretary of State, will find many consolations for your removal from one in which your usefulness was well understood.

I wish it was easy to replace you in the department you will leave. But this is a most difficult point.

I consider it as absolutely necessary that the person shall come from some State south of Pennsylvania. All the great offices in the hands of men from Pennsylvania northward, would do *the lord knows what mischief*. I speak as to public opinion. Hence I forbear any remarks on characters from that quarter.

Of those South, notwithstanding there are real and weighty objections, I incline on the whole to *Lee*.*

Of the others whom you present (and none others have occurred to me), whose qualifications are known to me, I believe I should prefer *Howard*. †

Yet I speak with hesitation, for I am afraid he is not enough

* Henry Lee, of Virginia.

† John Eagar Howard, a soldier of the Revolution, and Governor of Maryland. The Secretaryship of War was offered to him, and he declined.

a man of sense or business. But he is of perfect worth, is respectable in the community, and has reputation as a soldier.

There are others who would stand better as to talents, but temper or fairness of character is wanted. I do not know enough of Winden.

Since writing the above, Judge Pendleton, of Georgia, has occurred to me. He was a military man, Aide to General Greene, and esteemed by him. He is certainly a man of handsome abilities. I have, however, within a few days, heard that he had some agency in the purchase of the Georgia lands. If he has had any interested concern in this transaction, it would be an immense objection. Otherwise, if he would accept, all things considered, I should prefer him. He is tinctured with Jeffersonian politics, but I should be mistaken if, among good men and better informed, he did not go right.

I have received the French copy of a certain paper, and thank you for it. The translation you mention has not yet come to hand. I will with pleasure revise, if requisite, and correct it. I even wish for the opportunity; for, as you say, it much concerns me, and it is also very important to the public, and there are many nice turns of expression, which, to be rendered perfectly, demand a very critical knowledge of the language.*

TO RUFUS KING.

December 14, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR:

An extraordinary press of occupation has delayed an answer to your letter on the subject of Mr. R.† Though it may come too late, I comply with your request as soon as I can.

The subject is truly a perplexing one; my mind has several times fluctuated. If there was nothing in the case but his imprudent sally upon a certain occasion, I should

* Now first printed from the Pickering papers, in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

† John Rutledge, of South Carolina, nominated by Washington for Chief-Justice of the United States, and rejected by the Senate on account of his habits and consequent mental condition.

think the reasons for letting him pass would outweigh those for opposing his passage. But if it be really true that he is sottish, or that his mind is otherwise deranged, or that he has exposed himself by improper conduct in pecuniary transactions, the bias of my judgment would be to negative. And as to the fact, I would satisfy myself by careful inquiry of persons of character who may have had an opportunity of knowing.

It is now, and, in certain probable events, will still more be of infinite consequence that our judiciary should be well composed. Reflection upon this in its various aspects weighs heavily upon my mind against Mr. R. upon the accounts I have received of him, and balances very weighty considerations the other way.

P. S.—From what a Mr. Wadsworth, lately in Philadelphia, tells me of a conversation between Burr, Baldwin, and Gallatin, it would seem that the two last gentlemen have made up their minds to consider the treaty, if ratified by Great Britain, as *conclusive upon the House of Representatives.* I thought it well this should be known to you, if not before understood from any other quarter.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Dec. 24, 1795.

SIR:

I have received your letter of the ——.

Young La Fayette is now with me. I had before made an offer of money in your name, and have repeated it; but the answer is, that they are not as yet in want, and will have recourse when needed.

Young La Fayette appears melancholy, and has grown thin. A letter lately received from his mother, which speaks of some thing which she wishes him to mention to you (as I learn from his preceptor), has quicked his sensibility and increased his regret. If I am satisfied that the present state of things is likely to occasion a durable gloom, endangering

the health, and in some sort the mind of the young man, I shall conclude, on the strength of former permission, to send him to you for a short visit; the rather, as upon repeated reflection, I am not able to convince myself that there is any real inconvenience in the step, and as there are certainly delicate opposite sides. But it will be my endeavor to make him content to remain away.

I have read with care Mr. Randolph's pamphlet. It does not surprise me. I consider it as amounting to a confession of guilt; and I am persuaded this will be the universal opinion. His attempts against you are viewed by all whom I have seen, as base. They will certainly fail of their aim, and will do good, rather than harm, to the public cause and to yourself. It appears to me that, by you, no notice can be, or ought to be, taken of the publication. It contains its own antidote.

I perceive that Mr. Fauchet, and with him Mr. Randolph, have imputed to me the having asked to *accompany you* on the Western expedition.

The true course of the fact was as follows: You had mentioned, and that early in the affair, *as a question for consideration*, the propriety and expediency of your going out with the militia. But no opinion had been given to you, and you had not announced *any determination* on the point when my letter to you, of the 19th of September, was written. That letter does not ask to *accompany you*, but to be permitted to go on the expedition. A short time after it was sent, you mentioned to me that you had concluded to go as far as Carlisle in the first instance, and to take your ulterior determination according to circumstances, and proposed to me to accompany you.

My request was independent of your going or not going. Its objects were—1st. That mentioned in my letter. 2d. An anxious desire that, by being present, I might have in my power, in a case *very interesting to my department*, as well as the government generally, to promote, in the event of your not going on the expedition, a course of conduct the

best calculated to obviate impediments, and secure its object. I had serious fears of treachery in Governor Mifflin, and I thought that even Lee might miss the policy of the case in some particulars, etc., etc.

These were the considerations that determined me, and not the little cunning policy by which Mr. Fauchet supposes me to have been governed.

I greatly miscalculate if a strong and general current does not now set in favor of the government on the question of the treaty.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, Dec. 26, 1795.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Cutting has given to me a perusal of his papers, respecting his agency in relieving our seamen from British impress. He wished my opinion *professionally* respecting the validity of his claim, which I declined to give, because it would contradict certain maxims I have prescribed to myself with regard to public questions pending while I was part of the administration.

But there are reasons which induce me to convey to you privately my view of the subject.

It appears to me clearly established that Mr. Cutting rendered a very meritorious and an important service to the United States. Its value is not to be estimated merely by the number of persons relieved, but by the influence of the exertion upon other cases—indeed, upon our trade generally with the English ports at the juncture. It is also a service very interesting to the feelings of all our citizens—and there was certainly much good zeal and address displayed upon the occasion. It sufficiently appears, too, that the nature of the case must have involved considerable expense, and in ways which frequently would not admit of after authentication.

Under these circumstances I feel a strong impression that it is of the policy, as well as of the justice of the government,

to go lengths in giving satisfaction to Mr. Cutting. 'T is a case which calls for liberality, not scrupulous or prying investigation. Mr. Cutting's own testimony from necessity ought to be received as to expenditures. This observation, to be sure, has reasonable limits. But still the case demands that the testimony should be received with influential effect.

Mr. Dorhman is an example of similar compensation in circumstances not unlike. Our own citizen has not an inferior claim.

What has been hitherto done for Mr. Cutting appears to be manifestly inadequate. If it could be supposed that there was risk of doing too much, it is of the reputation of the government that the error should be on that side. Care ought to be taken that a zealous citizen, who has rendered real service, should not be out of pocket, and out of reputation, too, by his bargain. I include a reasonable compensation for service, as well as reimbursement of expenses.

These ideas will, I am sure, be received as they are intended.

TO WASHINGTON.

December, 1795.

SIR:

I have the pleasure to send you enclosed two letters—one from young Lafayette, the other from his preceptor. They appear reconciled to some further delay.

I take the liberty to enclose a copy of a letter to the Secretary of State respecting Mr. Cutting. I do not know upon the whole what sort of a man Mr. Cutting is; but as to the particular subject of his claim, I really think it deserves an indulgent consideration, and that it is expedient and right to favor it to a liberal extent. Some reflections have made me think it advisable to place the matter under your eye. Neither the Secretary of State nor Mr. Cutting will be informed of this.

I wrote you a few lines two or three days ago in answer to your letter concerning Mr. Randolph's pamphlet.

TO RUFUS KING.

January, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

If the newspapers tell truth, it would appear that Massachusetts has anticipated New York. But it is intended by our friends in the Legislature to give some pointed discountenance to the propositions. It was expected that it would have been done to-day, but by the divergings of some men who seek popularity with both sides, they have gotten into an unnecessary debate upon the proposition in detail, which will lose time; but in the result a handsome majority will do right.

Lawrence is hurt, and as far as I see, not without some reason, from particular circumstances, at being left out of the direction of the bank. It will be balm to his feelings to be put into the direction of the office here, and I believe it will be an improvement of the direction to do it. I wish you would endeavor to bring it about. Speak to Bayard of our city and to Wharton of Philadelphia. This is a suggestion of my own, for Lawrence rather rides a high horse upon the occasion. Yours truly. _____

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Jan. 19, 1796.

SIR:

Mrs. De Neuville, widow of Mr. De Neuville,* formerly of Holland, lately passed through this city. On her way she called upon me, and announced her intention to make application to Congress, on the ground of the political services rendered the United States by her husband as, in fact, a principal cause of his pecuniary misfortunes, and expressed a wish that I would lay the case under your eye. I told her that your situation did not permit you to take an agency in similar matters depending before Congress, and that you were very delicate on such subjects. She replied that you

* John De Neuville, of the Dutch banking-house of John De Neuville & Sons. He was an active, agreeable, speculative man, who had more or less to do with our financial efforts during the war. He made propositions to Franklin, which were dismissed as extravagant, and John Adams, with many misgivings and ultimate disapproval, had some dealings with him.

might, perhaps, indirectly promote her cause, and that from a letter from you to her husband, she was encouraged to think you would be disposed to befriend her. I yielded at last to female importunity, and promised to mention the matter. I do not know what the case admits of, but from papers which she showed me, it would seem that she has pretensions on the kindness of this country.

Our merchants here are becoming very uneasy on the subject of the French captures and seizures. They are certainly very perplexing and alarming, and present an evil of a magnitude to be intolerable, if not shortly remedied. My anxiety to preserve peace with France is known to you, and it must be the wish of every prudent man that no honorable expedient for avoiding a rupture be omitted. Yet there are bounds to all things. This country cannot see its trade an absolute prey to France without resistance. We seem to be where we were with Great Britain when Mr. Jay was sent there, and I cannot discern but that the spirit of the policy, then pursued with regard to England, will be the proper one now in respect to France—viz.: a solemn and final appeal to the justice and interest of France, and if this will not do, measures of self-defence. Any thing is better than absolute humiliation. France has already gone much further than Great Britain ever did.

I give vent to my impressions on this subject, though I am persuaded your own reflections cannot materially vary.

TO WASHINGTON.

SIR: January 19, 1796.

The bearer of this letter is Doctor Bollman,* whom you have heard of as having made an attempt for the relief of the Marquis La Fayette, which very nearly succeeded. The circumstances of this affair, as stated by Doctor Bollman and

* Eric Bollman, M.D., a Hanoverian by birth, concerned, as here stated, in the effort to liberate La Fayette. Banished for this, he came to the United States, and was a friend of Burr, and mixed up in his conspiracy, after which he returned to Europe.

Mr. Huger,* son of B. Huger, of South Carolina, deceased, who assisted, do real credit to the prudence, management, and enterprise of the doctor, and show that he is a man of sense and energy.

He appears to have been induced to think that he attempted a service which would strongly recommend him to the *favor* of this country, in which idea I have reason to believe that Mr. Pinckney, among others, encouraged him, and, as a consequence of it, he hopes for some civil employment under our government. His expectations of what he may begin with are not high, it being principally his object to obtain some present provision in a way which may lead him, if he discovers talents, to some thing better. He appears to be a man of education, speaks several languages, converses sensibly, is of polite manners, and, I dare say, has the materials of future advancement.

I have not left him unapprised of the difficulties in his way, but he concludes to go to Philadelphia to ascertain what is, or is not possible, relying at least on a kind reception from you.

He brought me letters from Mr. and Mrs. Church, which speak handsomely of him. I believe they had a chief agency in promoting his undertaking.

P. S.—The doctor is a German.

TO WASHINGTON.

SIR: NEW YORK, Feb. 25, 1796.

The evening I had last the pleasure of seeing you, you asked my opinion whether any and what measures might be taken with the Senate with reference to the treaty with Great Britain, in the event of its not arriving before the adjournment of the Legislature.

I mentioned as a hasty thought, that I feared it would be

* Francis Kinloch Huger, whose father, Col. Benj. Huger, was killed in the war, at Charleston, in 1780. He returned after the affair at Olmutz and entered the army. He died in 1855, aged 81.

impossible to detain them long in expectation of a treaty not arrived, but that it might be advisable, immediately after the adjournment, to notify another meeting, as little distant as might be compatible with reasonable time of notice.

On reflection this opinion appears to me not to be well founded as to the last point. I fear the first part will be found true, and that the body would not upon casualty remain many days together after the expiration of the session.

In place of the course which I at first mentioned I submit the following:

"That the Secretary of State write a letter to each member present and absent, announcing the expectation of the treaty, and that, when arrived, the Senate will be convened by a proclamation for a time not exceeding six weeks."

The letter of the Secretary of State to be sent by land, and by water also, to the most remote members, and when the proclamation for convening the Senate issues, the same be done, upon special expresses for the land conveyance, and having ready some swift-sailing vessel for the water conveyance.

With these precautions, I think six weeks' notice will be enough.

The President cannot specially convene the Senate without announcing that an *extraordinary occasion exists.* He had, when I left Philadelphia, no such *advice* of the treaty as would warrant the assertion, and even if he had, until it arrives there is a possibility of a miscarriage, which might prevent his having it ready to lay before the Senate at the time of meeting, if they should be convened upon contingency. These reflections have led to the change of opinion.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: March, 1796.

Enclosed are two letters which I will thank you to send on. I have just seen Livingston's motion concerning instructions,* etc. My first impression is that the pro-

* This was the demand for papers relating to the Jay treaty which caused so much discussion, and with which Washington finally declined to comply.

priety of a compliance with the call, if made, is extremely doubtful. But much careful thought on the subject is requisite.

P. S.—I send you also a letter from Mrs. Church to Mr. Beaumeté, which I will thank you to send to Mr. Talleyrand.*

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, March 7, 1796.

SIR:

I found young La Fayette here, and delivered him your letter, which much relieved him. I fancy you will see him on the first day of April.

Mr. Livingston's motion in the House of Representatives concerning the production of papers, has attracted much attention. The opinion here of those who think, is that if the motion succeeds, it ought not to be complied with. Besides, that in a matter of such a nature the production of the papers cannot fail to start new and unpleasant game. It will be fatal to the negotiating power of the government if it is to be a matter of course for a call of either House of Congress to bring forth all the communications, however confidential.

It seems to me that some thing like the following answer by the President will be advisable:

"A right in the House of Representatives to demand and have, as matter of course, and without specification of any object, all communications respecting negotiations with a foreign power, cannot be admitted without danger of much inconvenience. A discretion in the executive department how far and when to comply in such cases is essential to the due conduct of foreign negotiations, and is essential to preserve the limits between the legislative and Executive departments. The present call is altogether indefinite, and without any declared purpose. The Executive has no basis

* Reprinted from "Administrations of Washington and Adams," i., 310.

on which to judge of the propriety of a compliance with it, and cannot, therefore, without forming a very dangerous precedent, comply.

"It does not occur that the view of the papers asked for can be relative to any purpose of the competency of the House of Representatives but that of an impeachment. In every case of a foreign treaty, the grounds for an impeachment must primarily be deduced from the nature of the instrument itself, and from nothing extrinsic. If at any time a treaty should present such grounds, and it shall have been so pronounced by the House of Representatives, and a further inquiry shall be necessary to ascertain the culpable person, there being then a declared and ascertained object, the President would attend with due respect to any application for necessary information."

This is but a hasty and crude outline of what has struck me as an eligible course. For, while a too easy compliance will be mischievous, a too peremptory and unqualified refusal might be liable to just criticism.

TO WILLIAM SMITH.*

March 10, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I observe Madison brings the power of the House of Representatives in the case of the treaty into question. Is the agency of the House of Representatives on the subject *deliberative* or *executive?* On the sophism that the Legislature, and each branch of it, is *essentially deliberative*, and consequently must have discretion, will he, I presume, maintain the freedom of the House to concur or not.

But the sophism is easily refuted. The Legislature, and each branch of it, is *deliberative*, but with *various* restrictions; not with *unlimited discretion*. All the injunctions and restrictions on the Constitution, for instance, abridge

* William Smith, Member of Congress from South Carolina.

its *deliberative* faculty, and leave it *quoad hoc*, merely executive. Thus the constitution enjoins that there shall be a fixed allowance for the judges, which shall not be diminished. The Legislature cannot, therefore, deliberate whether they will make a permanent provision, and when the allowance is fixed, they cannot deliberate whether they will appropriate and pay the money. So far their deliberative faculty is abridged. The *mode* of raising and appropriating the money only remains matter of deliberation.

So, likewise, the constitution says that the President and Senate shall make treaties, and that these treaties shall be supreme laws. It is a contradiction to call a thing a law which is not binding. It follows that by constitutional injunction the House of Representatives quoad the stipulations of treaties, as in the case cited, respecting the judges, are not deliberative, but merely executive, *except as to the means of executing.*

Any other doctrine would vest the Legislature and each House with unlimited discretion, and destroy the very idea of a constitution limiting its discretion. The constitution would at once vanish.

Besides, the *legal* power to refuse the execution of a law is a *power to repeal it.* Thus, the House of Representatives must, as to treaties, concentre in itself the whole legislative power, and undertake, without the Senate, to repeal a law. For the law is complete by the action of the President and Senate.

Again. A treaty, which is a contract between nation and nation, abridges even the legislative discretion of the whole Legislature by the moral obligation of keeping its faith; *a fortiori*, that of one branch. In theory, there is no method by which the obligations of a treaty can be annulled but by mutual consent of the contracting parties, by ill-faith in one of them, or by a revolution of government, which is of a nature so to change the condition of parties as to render the treaty inapplicable.

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, March 16, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your letter of the ——. My opinion on the resolution when it first appeared was that the President should answer in substance as follows, viz.:

"That it could not be admitted as a right of course in the House of Representatives to call for and have papers in the Executive department, especially those relating to foreign negotiations, which frequently embrace confidential matters. That, under all the circumstances, upon so definite a call, without any declared specific object, he did not think it proper nor consistent with what he owed to a due separation of the respective powers to comply with the call. That if, in the course of the proceedings of the House, a question of their competency should arise, for which any of the papers in question might be necessary, an application made on that ground would be considered with proper respect," etc.

But after what has taken place in the discussion, if it can with propriety be got in as to form, I think a stand ought to be made by the President against the usurpation. The following propositions comprise an obvious ground:

I.—The Constitution empowers the President, with the Senate, to make treaties.

II.—A treaty is a perfected compact between two nations, obligatory on both.

III.—That cannot be a perfected contract or treaty to the validity of which the concurrence of any other power in the State is constitutionally necessary. Again:

IV.—The Constitution says a treaty is a *law*.

V.—A law is an obligatory rule of action prescribed by the competent authority. But—

VI.—That cannot be such a rule of action, or *law*, to the validity of which the assent of any other person is requisite. Again:

VII.—The object of the *legislative* power is to prescribe a

rule of action for our own nation, which includes foreigners coming among us.

VIII.—The object of the treaty power is, by agreement, to settle a rule of action between two nations, binding on both.

IX.—These objects are essentially different and, in a constitutional sense, cannot interfere.

X.—The treaty power binding the *will* of the nation, must, within its constitutional limits, be paramount to the legislative power, which is that will; or, at least, the last *law* being a treaty must repeal an antecedent contrary law. And,

XI.—If the legislative power is competent to repeal this law by a subsequent law, this must be the whole legislative power, by a solemn act in the forms of the Constitution, not one branch of the legislative power by disobeying the law.

XII.—The foregoing construction reconciles the two powers, and assigns them distinguishable spheres of action; while

XIII.—The other construction, that claiming that a right of assent is a sanction for the House of Representatives, destroys the treaty, making powerless and negative two propositions in the Constitution, *to wit:* 1. That the President, with the Senate, is competent to make treaties. 2. That a treaty is a law.

On these grounds, with the President's name a bulwark not to be shaken is erected. The propositions, in my opinion, amount to irresistible demonstration.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, March 24, 1796.

SIR:

I had the honor to receive yesterday your letter of the 22d. The course you suggest has some obvious advantages, and merits careful consideration. I am not, however, with-

out fear that there are things in the *instructions* to Mr. Jay—which good policy, considering the matter *externally* as well as *internally*, would render it inexpedient to communicate. This I shall ascertain to-day. A middle course is under consideration—that of not communicating the papers to the House, but of declaring that the Secretary of State is directed to permit them to be *read* by the *members individually*. But this is liable to a great part of the objections which militate against a full public disclosure. I throw it out, however, here, that you may be thinking of it, if it has not before occurred. In the course of this day, I shall endeavor to concentre my ideas, and prepare some thing, the premises of which may be in any event proper, admitting of the conclusion being modified and adapted to your eventual determination.

TO WASHINGTON.

March 26, 1796.

SIR:

I perceive by the newspaper that the resolution has been carried. I have not been idle as far as my situation would permit, but it will not be in my power, as I had hoped, to send you what I am preparing by this day's post; the next will carry it. It does not, however, appear necessary that the Executive should be in a hurry.

The final result, in my mind, for reasons I shall submit in my next, is that the papers ought all to be refused. I am persuaded that the communication of the instructions in particular would do harm to the President and to the government.

TO WASHINGTON.

March 28, 1796.

SIR:

I am mortified at not being able to send you by this post a certain draft. But the opinion that reasons ought to be given, and pretty fully, has extended it to considerable

length and a desire to make it accurate as to *idea* and expression keeps it still upon the anvil. But it is so far prepared that I can assure it by to-morrow's post. Delay is always unpleasant. But the case is delicate and important enough to justify it.

I mentioned as my opinion, that the instructions to Mr. Jay, if published, would do harm. The truth, unfortunately, is that it is in general a crude mass, which will do no credit to the administration. This was my impression of it at the time, but the delicacy of attempting too much reformation in the work of another head of department, the hurry of the moment, and a great confidence in the person to be sent, prevented my attempting that reformation.

There are several particular points in it which would have a very ill effect to be published.

I.—There is a part which seems to admit the idea that an adjustment might be made respecting the spoliations which should leave that matter finally to the *ordinary course* of the British courts. This is obscurely and ambiguously expressed, but the least color for such a construction would give occasion for infinite clamor.

II.—The negotiator is expressly instructed to accede to the *entire abolition of alienism* as to inheritances of land. You have seen what clamor has been made about the moderate modification of this idea in the treaty, and can thence judge what a load would fall on this part of the instructions.

III.—He is instructed to enter into an article against the employment of privateers in war. This is manifestly against the policy of a country which has no *navy* in a treaty with a country which has a large navy. For it is chiefly by privateers that we could annoy the trade of Great Britain. Some would consider this as a philosophic whim; others as an intentional sacrifice of the interests of this country to Great Britain.

IV.—There are several parts which hold up the disreputable and disorganizing idea of not being able to *restrain our own citizens.*

V.—There are parts which, though proper to our own agent, the publication of which would be a violation of decorum towards Great Britain, after an amicable termination of the affair, and offensive because contrary to the rules of friendly and respectful procedure.

VI.—The instructions have too little point (in the spirit of the framer, who was in the habit of saying much and saying little), and would be censured as altogether deficient in firmness and spirit.

On the whole, I have no doubt that the publication of these instructions would do harm to the Executive, and to the character and interest of the government.

The draft will be so prepared as to admit of this conclusion.

If the President concludes to send papers, they ought only to be the *commissions*, and Mr. Jay's *correspondence*, saying that these are all that it appears to him for the public interest to send.

But he may be then prepared for as much clamor as if he had sent none. It would be said that what was done showed that the principle had not been the obstacle—and that the instructions were withheld because they would not bear the light. Or, at most, only that part of the instructions should go which begins at these words, "4. This enumeration presents, generally, the objects which it is desirable to comprise in a commercial treaty," etc., to the end of the instructions.

But after the fullest reflection I have been able to give the subject (though I perceive serious degrees of inconveniencies in the course), I entertain a final opinion that it will be best, after the usurpation attempted by the House of Representatives, to send none, and to resist in totality.

TO WASHINGTON.

March 29, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I wish the enclosed * could have been sent in a more perfect state. But it was impossible. I hope, however, it can be made out and may be useful. It required more time to say all that was proper in a more condensed form. In considering the course to be pursued by the President, it may be well he should be reminded, that the same description of men who call for the papers have heretofore maintained, that they were not bound by any communication in confidence, but were free afterwards to do as they pleased with papers sent them.†

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, April 2, 1796.

SIR:

The express is this morning gone off with your letter to young La Fayette. I foresaw when in Philadelphia a certain machination on the subject.

I rejoice at the decision you have come to in regard to the papers. Whatever may happen, it is right in itself, will elevate the character of the President, and inspire confidence abroad. The contrary would have encouraged a spirit of usurpation, the bounds of which could not be foreseen.

If there is time, I should like to have back the paper lately sent to correct, prune, guard, and strengthen—I have no copy. But of the expediency of this the circumstances on the spot will decide. There is great fitness in the message to the House. I see only one point the least vulnerable, the too direct notice of the debate in the House—which may be attacked as contrary to parliamentary usage. I hear the criticism here among the L——s.‡ But this cannot be very material.

* Draft of an answer to the request of the House of Representatives for papers. See above, vol. vii., p. 118.

† Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., 377.

‡ Livingstons.

TO RUFUS KING.

April 2, 1796.

Thank you for yours of yesterday. I have no copy of the paper sent: the greatest part went in the original draft, though considerably reformed according to joint ideas, and somewhat strengthened by new thoughts. A letter I have received tells me that it came to hand after the ground which was acted upon had been formally considered and taken in council, and that it is referred for future use in the event of an expected criticism of the message.

I have asked for it *conditionally*, to prune, correct, etc. If I get it you shall have a copy. But you must take care that there is no crossing of paths.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, April 9, 1796.

SIR:

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity of announcing to you one whom I know to be interesting to you as a bearer of this—Mr. Motier La Fayette. I allow myself to share, by anticipation, the satisfaction which the meeting will afford to all the parties—the more, as I am persuaded, that time will confirm the favorable representation I have made of the person, and justify the interest you take in him.

I have pleasure, also, in presenting to you Mr. Frestel, who accompanies him, and who more and more convinces me that he is entirely worthy of the charge reposed in him, and every way entitled to esteem.

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, April 15, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

A letter by yesterday's post from our friend Ames,* informed me that the majority (fifty-seven concurring) had resolved in a private meeting to refuse appropriation for the

* Fisher Ames, of Massachusetts.

treaty. A most important crisis ensues. Great evils may result, unless good men play their card well and with promptitude and decision. For we must seize and carry along with us the public opinion, and loss of time may be loss of every thing.

To me our true plan appears to be the following (I presuppose that a certain communication has been made):

1st. The President ought, immediately after the House has taken the ground of refusal, to send them a solemn protest. This protest ought to contain reasons in detail against the claim of the House in point of constitutional right, and ought to suggest summarily, but with solemnity and energy, the danger to the interest and peace of the country from the measures of the House, the certainty of a deep wound to our character with foreign nations, and essential destruction of their confidence in the government, concluding with an intimation that in such a state of things he must experience extreme embarrassment in proceeding in any pending or future negotiations which the affairs of the United States may require, inasmuch as he cannot look for due confidence from others, nor give them the requisite expectation that stipulations will be fulfilled on our part.

A copy of this protest to be sent to the Senate for their information. The Senate, by resolutions to express strongly their approbation of his principles, to assure him of their firm support, and to advise him to proceed in the execution of the treaty on his part in the confidence that he will derive from the virtue and good sense of the people, constitutionally exerted, eventual and effectual support, and may still be the instrument of preserving the Constitution, the peace, and the honor of the nation.

Then the merchants to meet in the city, and second by their resolutions the measures of the President and Senate, further addressing their fellow-citizens to co-operate with them. Petitions afterwards to be handed throughout the United States.

The Senate to hold fast, and consent to no adjournment

till the expiration of the term of service of the present House, unless provision made.

The President to cause a confidential communication to be made to the British minister, stating candidly what has happened, his regrets, his adherence nevertheless to the treaty, his resolution to persist in the execution, as far as depends on the Executive, and his hope that the faith of the country will be eventually preserved.

I prefer that measures should begin with a protest of the President, as it will be in itself proper, and there will be more chance of success if the contest appears to be with him and the Senate auxiliaries than in the reverse.

But in all this business, celerity, decision, and an imposing attitude are indispensable. The glory of the President, the safety of the Constitution—the greatest interests—depend upon it. Nothing will be wanting here. I do not write to the President on the subject.

An idea has come from *Cooper* of an intention in our friends in the House of Representatives to resist the execution of the other treaties—the Spanish and Algerine—unless coupled with the British. But this will be altogether wrong and impolitic. The misconduct of the other party cannot justify in us an imitation of their principles. 'T is best, I think, that the first course should be given to the other treaties. Or at most, if a *feint* of opposition is deemed advisable, it ought to be left to the Senate by postponement, etc. But even this is very delicate and very questionable.

Let us be *right*, because to do right is intrinsically proper, and I verily believe it is the best means of securing final success. Let our adversaries have the whole glory of sacrificing the interests of the nation.

P. S.—If the treaty is not executed, the President will be called upon, by regard to his character and the public good, to *keep his post* till another House of Representatives has pronounced.

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, April 18, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your letter received to-day. Our merchants here are not less alarmed than those of Philadelphia, and will do all they can. All the insurance people meet to-day. The merchants and traders will meet to-morrow or the next day. A petition will be prepared and circulated among the other citizens.

I regret that a certain communication was not made. Indeed, I think that the Executive will be hereafter blamed for keeping back the fact in so critical a posture of things.

TO RUFUS KING.

April 20, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Yesterday's post brought me a letter from you, which gave me pleasure. The papers will apprise you of the proceedings of the merchants and traders here on yesterday. There is among them, also, "*un*exampled unanimity," and, as far as I can judge, the current is in our favor throughout the city. Persons to-day are going through the different wards.

P. S.—Our friends in the House will do well to gain time.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, April 20, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the eighteenth instant. The money paid me for you shall be placed to your credit in the office of discount and deposit, as you desire.

The British ministry are as great fools or as great rascals as our Jacobins, else our commerce would not continue to be distressed as it is by their cruisers; nor would the Executive be embarrassed as it now is by the new proposition.

Not knowing the precise form of that proposition, I cannot have an opinion what is right on the part of the Executive. But, if I understand it, it ought to be sufficient for

the Executive to declare that the article in the treaty with the Indians can never operate, nor will be permitted to operate, in contravention with the treaty of Great Britain. It relates to a right reserved for our benefit, which we can and will waive; and, being in a treaty of subsequent date, it naturally gives way to another of prior date, with which it is consistent. The Executive ought to be careful about admitting the propriety of a new condition, though it ought to be ready to give all due satisfaction. It should not even shun a new explanatory article, if reasonable in itself, but should agree to it upon the strength of its own reasonableness, not as a new condition foreign to the treaty. This affair requires great caution; but, as I said, I do not know enough to give advice worth much.

Yet the government must take care not to appear pusillanimous. I hope a *very serious* remonstrance has long since gone against the wanton impressment of our seamen. It will be an error to be too tame with this overbearing Cabinet.

Our city is in motion against the plan of the majority in the House of Representatives with regard to the treaty. The current appears to be strong with us. The papers will tell you the measures in contemplation.

But I was sorry to learn that a *proper qualified* communication was made to the House of Representatives of the late communication from the British agent. The Executive may hereafter be blamed for withholding so important a fact; yet, not knowing the whole affair, I cannot judge well on this point more than on the other.

TO RUFUS KING.

April 23, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your two letters, and shall this day attend to the one which requires it. I see, however, no objection to it as it stands, and I do not now perceive how the further

object you aim at could be accomplished in the manner you seem to desire.

I have written to *Ames* this day concerning the course of things in our city. He will communicate to you, as I have not time to repeat. We are decidedly well. But it is intended to-day to continue the petition in circulation, and to-morrow it will be sent. I have thought it advisable to publish an extract from your letter without naming you.

TO RUFUS KING.

May 4, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Since my last I have received two or three letters from you. The late turn of the treaty question makes us all very happy. I hope no future embarrassment will arise.

I am entirely of opinion that, Patrick Henry declining, Mr. Pinckney* ought to be our man. It is even an idea of which I am fond in various lights. Indeed, on latter reflection, I rather wish to be rid of Patrick Henry, that we may be at full liberty to take up Pinckney.

In the event of Pinckney's return to this country, I am of opinion, all circumstances considered, it is expedient you should replace him. I hope no great question will in a short period agitate our councils, and I am sure you will do much good on the scene in question. I have called on Jay, but happened not to find him disengaged. I shall quickly see him, and shall, with great pleasure, do every thing requisite on my part.

We believe, confidently, our election in the city has succeeded; the other party, however, also claims success. Our Senator ticket seems admitted on both sides to have prevailed, and all accounts assure us of great success throughout the State. The *vile affair* of whipping Burke and McCredy made our election, in the view of the common people, a question between the rich and the poor. You

* Thomas Pinckney, of South Carolina. He was Minister to England, and had just concluded a treaty with Spain, securing the free navigation of the Mississippi.

will easily conceive how much this must have embarrassed and jeoparded.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

DEAR SIR: May 10, 1796.

Inclosed is a letter which I will thank you to hand to its destination.

While I have my pen in my hand, give me leave to mention a particular subject to you. Mr. Pinckney, it is said, desires to return to the United States. In this case a successor will be wanted. If we had power to make a man for the purpose, we could not imagine a fitter than Mr. King.* He is tired of the Senate, and I fear will resign at all events. I presume he would accept the mission to England. Can there be a doubt that it will be wise to offer it to him? †

TO WASHINGTON.

SIR: NEW YORK, May 10, 1796.

When last in Philadelphia you mentioned to me your wish that I should *re-dress* a certain paper which you had prepared. As it is important that a thing of this kind should be done with great care, and much at leisure, touched and re-touched, I submit a wish that as soon as you have given it the *body* you mean it to have, it may be sent to me.‡

TO WASHINGTON.

SIR: NEW YORK, May 20, 1796.

A belief that the occasion to which they may be applicable is not likely to occur, whatever may have been once intended, or *pretended in terrorem*, has delayed the following observations in compliance with your desire, and which are

* Rufus King, who was appointed and accepted.

† Now first printed from the Pickering papers in possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

‡ "Copied from Writings of Washington. Whether it is an extract from, or the entire letter, is unknown to the editor." [Note by J. C. Hamilton.] The paper referred to is the "Farewell Address."

now the result of conferences with the gentlemen you named.

The *precise form* of any *proposition* or *demand* which may be made to or of the government, must so materially influence the course proper to be pursued with regard to such proposition or demand, that it is very difficult to judge by anticipation what would be fit and right. The suggestions which can be submitted must therefore be very general and liable to much modification, according to circumstances.

It would seem in almost any case advisable to put forward a calm exhibition of the views by which our government has been influenced in relation to the present war of Europe,—making prominent the great interest we have in peace, in our present infant state; the limitedness of our capacity for external effort; the much greater injury we should have suffered than good we could have done to France, by taking an active part with her; the probability that she would have derived more advantage from our neutrality than from our direct aid; the promptitude with which, while all the world was combined against her, we recognized the new order of things and the continuance of our treaties, and before any other power had done so; the danger to which we exposed ourselves in so doing; the fidelity with which we have adhered to our treaties, notwithstanding formal violations of certain parts of them on the other side; our readiness, to the utmost extent of our abilities, to discharge our debt without *hesitation in the earliest period of the revolution*, and latterly having facilitated an anticipated enjoyment of the balance; the zeal and confidence of our merchants, by which they are now creditors for very large sums to France; the patience with which we have seen infractions of our rights; the peculiar nature of the war as it regarded the origin of our relations to France (quare?); the declaration of the war by France against the maritime powers; her incapacity for maritime effort and to supply our deficiency in that particular so as to render a

war not absolutely ruinous to us; the early expectations given to us by her agents that we were not expected to become parties; the exposed state of our commerce at this time with an immense property of our merchants afloat, relying on the neutral plan which they have understood our government to be pursuing, even with the concurrence of France, at least without its opposition; the extreme mischiefs to us of a sudden departure from the plan, and the little advantage to France from our aid; the merely *peace* views which influenced our treaty with Great Britain; the nature of that treaty involved no ingredient of political connection reserving the obligation of our prior treaties; the commercial articles terminating in two years after the present war; nothing in it to change the nature of our relations with France. All this will, of course, require great caution and delicacy, so as not to compromise the dignity of the country or give umbrage elsewhere, and I think the observations ought to hold out the idea that, under all the circumstances of the case, the government of the country thought itself at full liberty consistently with its treaties with France, to pursue a neutral plan. And they ought to hold up strongly our desire to maintain friendship with France; our regret that any circumstance of dissatisfaction should occur; our hope that justice and reason will prevail, and preserve the good understanding, etc. The conclusion of this preliminary exposition will be according to the nature of the proposition.

If it should claim a renunciation of the British treaty, the answer will naturally be that this sacrifice of the positive and recent engagements of the country is pregnant with consequences too humiliating and injurious to allow us to believe that the expectation can be persisted in by France, since it is to require a thing impossible, and to establish, as a price of the continuance of friendship with us, the sacrifice of our honor by an act of perfidy which would destroy the value of our friendship to any nation. That, besides, the Executive, if it were capable of complying with a demand so fatal to us, is not competent to it, it being of the province of Congress,

by a declaration of war, or otherwise, in the proper cases, to annul the operation of treaties.

If it should claim the abandonment of the articles of the present treaty respecting free ships, free goods, etc., the answer may be that our treaties with France are an entire work, parts of a whole; that nevertheless the Executive is disposed to enter into a new negotiation by a new treaty to modify them, so as may consist with a due regard to mutual interest and the circumstances of parties, and may even tend to strengthen the relations of friendship and good understanding between the two countries.

If the guaranty of the West Indies should be claimed, the answer may be, "that the decision of this question belongs to Congress, who, if it be desired, will be convened to deliberate upon it." I presume and hope they will have adjourned—for to gain time is every thing.

The foregoing marks the general course of our reflections. They are sketched hastily, because they can only be general ideas, and much will depend on minute circumstances.

I observe what you say on the subject of a certain diplomatic mission. Permit me to offer with frankness the reflections which have struck my mind.

The importance of our security, and commerce, and good understanding with Great Britain, renders it very important that a man *able* and not *disagreeable* to that government, should be there. The gentleman in question, equally with any who could go, and better than any willing to go, answers this description. The idea hinted in your letter will apply to every man fit for the mission, by his conspicuousness, talents, and dispositions. 'T is the stalking-horse of a certain party, and is made use of against every man who is not in their views and of sufficient consequence to attract their obloquy. If listened to, it will deprive the government of the services of the most able and faithful agents. Is this expedient? What will be gained by it? Is it not evident that this party will pursue its hostility at all events as far as public opinion will permit? Does policy require any thing

more than that they shall have no real cause to complain? Will it do, in deference to their culminating insinuations, to forbear employing the most competent men, or to entrust the great business of the country to unskilful, unfaithful, or doubtful hands? I really feel a conviction that it will be very dangerous to let party insinuations of this kind prove a serious obstacle to the employment of the best qualified characters. Mr. King is a remarkably well-informed man, a very judicious one, a man of address, a man of fortune and economy, whose situation affords just ground of confidence;—a man of unimpeached probity where he is best known, a firm friend to the government, a supporter of the measures of the President—a man who cannot but feel that he has strong pretensions to confidence and trust.

I might enlarge on these topics, but I have not leisure, neither can it be necessary. I have thrown out so much in the fulness of my heart, and too much in a hurry to fashion either the idea or the expression as it ought to be. The President, however, will, I doubt not, receive what I have said—as it is meant, as dictated by equal regard to the public interest and to the honorable course of his administration.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: May 30, 1796.

I perceive Congress are invading the Sinking Fund system. If this goes through, and is sanctioned by the President, the fabric of public credit is prostrate, and the country and the President are disgraced. Treasury bills, and every expedient, however costly, to meet exigencies, must be preferable, in the event, to such an overthrow of system.

TO JAMES MCHENRY.

MY DEAR MC.: NEW YORK, June 1, 1796.

I am told the Executive Directory have complained of Mr. ———, our consul at ———. Perhaps the complaint

* James McHenry, of Maryland, Secretary of War.

may be ill-founded, but perhaps also he was indiscreet in giving color for it. Admit too that he is a good man, yet we must not quarrel with France for *pins and needles.* The public temper would not bear any umbrage taken, where a trifling concession might have averted it. 'T is a case for temporizing, reserving our firmness for great and necessary occasions. Let Mr. ——— be superseded with a kind letter to him. I do not write to Pickering, or the President, because I am not regularly possessed of the information, but I hope you will attend to the matter, even at the expense of being a little officious.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, June 1, 1796.

SIR:

Your letter of the 29th was delivered me by Mr. King yesterday afternoon. I thought I had acknowledged the receipt of the paper inquired for in a letter written speedily after it—or in one which transmitted you a draft of a *certain letter* by Mr. Jay. I hope this came to hand.

I am almost afraid to appear officious in what I am going to say; but the matter presses so deeply on my mind, that fearing you may not recollect the situation of the thing, and that it may happen not to be brought fully under your eye, I cannot refrain from making the suggestion to you. It regards a bill which, I am told, has lately passed the two Houses of Congress, authorizing a sale of *bank stock,* for paying off a sum due to the bank. You will perceive by the 8th and 9th sections of the act entitled, "An Act making further provision for the support of the public credit," and for the redemption of the public debt, passed the 3d of March, 1795, that the dividends of the bank stock are appropriated to the sinking fund, with all the force and solemnity of which language is capable, and that to divert them in the manner proposed (and this too without any substitute in the act which so diverts) will be a formal, express, and unequivocal violation of the public faith, will subvert the

system of the sinking fund, and with it all the security which is meant to be given to the people for the redemption of the public debt, and, violating the sanctity of an appropriation for the public debt, will overturn at once the foundation of the public credit. These are obvious and undeniable consequences; and though I am aware that great embarrassments may ensue to the Treasury if the bill by the objection of the President is lost, and no substitute for it takes place towards the reimbursement of the bank; yet I am sure no consequences can ensue of equal moment from the rejection as from the principle of the bill going into execution.

All the President's administration has effected for establishing the credit of the country will be prostrate at a single blow. He will readily make all necessary comments upon this position. It grieves my heart to see so much shocking levity in our representative body.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, June 9, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I called at your house the morning of my departure, but you were not then up. While I was in the city, we had a little conversation concerning an affair of an arrangement with *Swan** for effecting a remittance to Holland. I intended to resume it for two reasons: one, because it has been represented to the disadvantage of the conduct of the Treasury; another because *Swan*, who lodged at the same house with me, begged me to converse with you on the subject, and give my opinion both to you and him of what I thought of the matter. The latter I should of course

* Colonel James Swan, of Boston. He had a most romantic and adventurous life, beginning as one of the Boston Tea-Party, and a soldier of the revolution. In 1787, he went to Paris a bankrupt, where he speculated successfully, and whence he returned with a fortune in 1795. He went back to Europe in 1798, engaged in still larger enterprises, and failed. At the suit of a creditor he was thrown into St. Pelagie in 1815, and remained there fifteen years, litigating constantly in French courts. He died in 1831.

have managed with due regard to all prudential considerations.

But I wished chiefly to apprize you that it is industriously circulated that Monroe and Skipwith, *as agents for the Treasury*, received Swan's money at Paris to remit to Holland, that they mismanaged the fund, produced, besides, delay and loss, and that the Treasury now endeavors to turn the loss on Swan. If you have not been apprized of this, it is requisite you should be.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: June 15, 1796.

The post of to-day brought me a letter from you. From some recent information which I have obtained here, I have scarcely any doubt that the plan of the French is—

Firstly.—To take all enemy property in our ships contrary to the treaty between the two countries.

Secondly.—To seize and carry in all our vessels laden with provisions for any English port.

Among this, all that they choose to think enemy property will be seized, and for the residue they will promise to pay.

This state of thing is extremely serious. The government must play a skilful card, or all is lost. No doubt an explanation has been asked of Mr. Adet. There is room enough for asking it, and the result, if *explanatory*, ought, in some convenient way, to be made known.

Moreover, the government must immediately set in earnest about averting the storm. To this end, a person must be sent in place of Monroe. General Pinckney, John Marshall, Mr. Dessaussure, of South Carolina, young Washington, the lawyer, McHenry, Secretary at War, Judge Peters, occur as elible in different degrees, either of them far preferable to Monroe. It may be understood that the appointment is permanent or temporary, at the choice of the person sent. Under this idea, perhaps Pinckney may be pre-

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

vailed upon, perhaps Marshall, it being well urged as a matter of great importance to the country.

I mentioned to Colonel Pickering an idea, which has since dwelt powerfully on my mind. Mr. King ought not to be empowered to do any thing to prolong the treaty beyond the two years after the war. This will afford the government a strong argument. I earnestly hope this idea will prevail in the instructions.

P. S.—After turning the thing over and over in my mind, I know of nothing better that you have in your power than to send McHenry. He is not yet obnoxious to the French, and has been understood formerly to have had some kindness towards their revolution. His present office would give a sort of importance to the mission. If he should incline to an absolute relinquishment, his mission might be temporary, and Colonel Pickering could carry on his office in his absence. He is at hand, and might depart immediately, and I believe he would explain very well, and do no foolish thing. Though unusual, perhaps it might be expedient for the President to write, himself, a letter to the Executive Directory, explaining the policy by which he has been governed, and assuring of the friendship. But this would merit great consideration. Our measures, however, should be prompt.

Sometimes I think of sending Pinckney, who is in England; but various uncertainties and possible delays deter one from this plan.

Remember always, as a primary motive of action, that the favorable opinion of our country is to be secured.

A frigate or two to serve as convoys would not be amiss. If the English had been wise, they would neither have harassed our trade themselves, nor suffered their trade with us to be harassed. They would see this a happy moment for conciliating us by a clever little squadron in our ports and on our coast.

A *hint* might not perhaps do harm.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

June 16, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

It appears to me material, under our present prospects, to complete three frigates without delay. They may be useful with reference to the Algerines. They may be useful to convoy our vessels out of the reach of picaroon privateers hovering on our coast. I know you want money; but could not the merchants, by secret movements, be put in motion to make you a loan? I think some thing of this kind may be done here, and I should presume at Philadelphia, etc. The sole ostensible object may be the Algerines, but the second object may circulate in whispers. If you conclude on any thing, I will second you.

Perhaps no bad form of the thing may be to place in the hands of your agents for building, Treasury bills from one hundred to one thousand dollars, payable in a year with interest; and to let it be known among the merchants that they are lodged exclusively to facilitate the equipment of the ships. But a more direct operation may be attempted, and I should hope with success, for the sum you may want for the frigates.

TO WASHINGTON.

June, 1796.

SIR:

I have received information this morning of a nature which, I think, you ought to receive without delay. A Mr. Le Guen,* a Frenchman—a client of mine, and in whom I have inspired confidence, and who is apparently a discreet and decent man—called on me this morning to consult me on the expediency of his becoming naturalized, in

* Louis Le Guen brought suit to recover money for goods sold by his factors, a Jewish house in New York. The first verdict was for the factors and was set aside. The verdict on the new trial was for Le Guen for $120,000, and this was affirmed in the Court of Errors (February, 1800) after a great argument by Hamilton. The case was a famous one. Gouverneur Morris appeared for the factors and Burr was associated with Hamilton.

order that certain events between France and the United States might not prejudice him in a suit which I am directed to bring for him for a value of 160,000 dollars. I asked him what the events to which he alluded were. He made me the following reply under the strictest injunctions of confidence: "I have seen a letter from St. Thomas to Mr. Labagarde of this city, informing him that a plan was adopted to seize all American vessels carrying to any English port provisions of any kind, to conduct them into some French port; if found to be British property, to condemn them; if American, to take them on the *accountability* of the government; adding that he must not thence infer that it was the intention to make war upon the United States, but it was with a view to retaliate the conduct of Great Britain, to keep supplies from her, and to obtain them for themselves, and was also bottomed on some political motives not necessary to be explained." "That it was also in contemplation when Admiral Richery arrived, if the ships could be spared, to send five sail of the line to this country." Fearing, he said, that this might produce a rupture between the two countries, he had called to consult me on the subject, etc.

I asked his permission to make the communication to you. He gave me leave to do it, but with the absolute condition that the knowledge of names was on no account to go beyond *you* and *myself*. I must therefore request, sir, that this condition be exactly observed. He has promised me further information.

I believe the information, as well because the source of it under all the circumstances engages my confidence, as because the thing appears in itself probable. France wants supplies, and she has not the means of paying, and our merchants have done crediting.

It becomes very material that the real situation should as soon as possible be ascertained, and that the merchants should know on what they have to depend. They expect that the government will ask an explanation of Mr.

Adet, and that in some proper way the result will be made known.

It seems to become more and more urgent that the United States should have some faithful organ near the French government to explain their real views and ascertain those of the French. It is all important that the people should be satisfied that the government has made every exertion to avert a rupture, and as early as possible.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

June 26, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I learn from a gentleman of character, that a prize, brought into Boston by a French privateer, is about to be sold. This being in direct breach of our treaty with Great Britain, how does it happen? Though no particular law passed, the treaty being the law of the land, our custom-houses can, and ought to, prevent the entry and sale of prizes, upon Executive instruction. If any thing is wanting to this end, for God's sake, my dear sir, let it be done, and let us not be disgraced.

Considering what is going on, and may go on, in the West Indies, it appears to me *essential* that the President should be empowered to lay embargoes in the interval between the present and the next session of Congress.

TO WASHINGTON.

July 5, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I was in due time favored with your letter of the 26th June, and consulted the gentleman you named on the subject of it. We are both of opinion there is no power in the President to appoint an envoy extraordinary, without the concurrence of the Senate, and that the information in question is not a sufficient ground for extraordinary convening the Senate. If, however, the President from his information collectively be convinced that a dangerous state of things

exists between us and France, and that an envoy extraordinary to avert the danger is a necessary measure, I believe this would, in the sense of the Constitution, warrant the calling of the Senate for the purpose. But this measure may be questionable in point of expediency, as giving a stronger appearance of danger than facts warrant. If further depredations on our commerce take place, if new revivals of the principle of the last capture should appear, it may alter the case. But without some thing more the measure would scarcely seem advisable. Mr. Jay and myself, though somewhat out of your question, talked of the expediency of removing Monroe, and though we perceive there are weighty reasons against it, we think those for it preponderate, if a proper man can be found. But here we feel, both, immense embarrassment, for he ought to be at the same time a friend to the government and understood to be not unfriendly to the French Revolution. General Pinckney is the only man we can think of who fully satisfies the idea, and unfortunately every past experiment forbids the hope that he would accept, though but for a short time. But if a character of tolerable fitness can be thought of, it would seem expedient to send him. At any rate, it is to be feared, if under the symptoms of discontent which have appeared on the part of the French government, no actual and full explanation takes place, it will bring serious censure upon the Executive. It will be said that it did not display as much zeal to avoid misunderstanding with France as with Great Britain; that discontents were left to rankle; that if the agent of the government in France was negligent or unfaithful, some other mode ought to have been found.

As to your resignation, sir, it is not to be regretted that the declaration of your intention should be suspended as long as possible, and suffer me to add that you should really hold the thing undecided to the last moment. I do not think it is in the power of party to throw any slur upon the lateness of your declaration. And you have an obvious justification in the state of things. If a storm gathers, how

can you retreat? This is a most serious question. The proper period now for your declaration seems to be two months before the time for the meeting of the electors. This will be sufficient. The parties will in the meantime electioneer conditionally, that is to say, if you decline; for a serious opposition to you will, I think, hardly be risked. I have completed the first draft (his own draft) of a certain paper, and shall shortly transcribe, correct, and forward it. I will then also prepare and send forward, without delay, the original paper (Washington's draft), corrected upon the general plan of it, so that you may have both before you for a choice in full time, and for alteration if necessary.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

July 7, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have had some conversation with some influential members of the Bank of New York, who are disposed to do all that shall be found possible. But I wish to know without exaggeration the *least* sum that will be a *material* relief to you, and when and how the payments will be desired.†

TO ELIAS BOUDINOT.

July 7, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

You will oblige me by lettting me have an extract from that part of your mortgage law in New Jersey which regulates the mode of *cancelling* mortgages; also an extract from the registering book of the usual manner in which entries for cancelling were made about the years 1771, 1772, and 1773, and by informing me whether these entries have been adjudged *conclusive*—though the order or certificate of the mortgage is not to be found, the mortgage money not paid, and the fact should appear that the entry was a fraudulent act of the registering officer.

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," ii., 468, 522.

† Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

Excuse the trouble I give you, and use me freely in a like case.

How are your election prospects? Do not let the discontent with *Dayton* * hazard the main point. 'T is better by a coalition with him to secure that, though you make some sacrifice of opinion, than to produce a dangerous schism.

Our affairs are critical, and *we* must be dispassionate and wise.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

July 15, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

The application for a loan from the Bank of New York, though powerfully supported by some of the leading directors, labors, owing to the jealousy and narrowness of certain ones, who see in it a plan to increase the active capital of the Branch Bank, and put them in its power. Unluckily, the *President* suddenly went off to Rhode Island with his wife and some sick children. I pursue the affair, and I hope still to accomplish it.

There will be no difficulty in obtaining a postponement of the existing loan. But this I tell them will not be sufficient.†

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

July 21, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I communicated your letter to Mr. Jay, and now give you our joint sense.

Considering the nature of the transaction and what must necessarily have been presumed to be the intent, and that the authority is on a public subject, and between two nations, we think that a decision by two out of three commissioners must be sufficient.

* Jonathan Dayton, of New Jersey.

† Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

We know nothing but an immediate personal interest in property which may be affected by the decision, that can be a conclusive objection to the person nominated—but this interest must be known, not suspected. The rest must be matter of negotiation. In point of *property*, neither government ought to name a person liable from local situation to the suspicion of particular interest or bias. But one cannot formally object to the nomination of the other on this general ground.

Declarations like those ascribed to Mr. Barkely, if well authenticated and unequivocal, importing clearly that he thought himself at liberty to gain advantages, and bound not to act impartially, would justify the government in stopping, and representing the matter to the British Government. But we ought to act with great caution not to give occasion to impute to us a spirit of procrastination or subterfuge. 'T is so much more important that the dispute should be settled than how it is settled (at least according to my idea of the object); that we should by no means seek for difficulties, but rather facilitate than impede.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

July 28, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have not lost sight of the negotiation with the bank, though it labors, and I have thought it best to let it lie by till the President returns. Mr. *McCormick* is violent against it, and plays on little jealousies and, what is still more efficacious, private *interests*, representing the consequent inability of the bank to accommodate the merchants, many of whom, from the unfortunate issue of some recent speculations, are likely to want *much aid*.†

* Now first printed from the Pickering papers in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

† Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

July 30, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have written you a short line previous to the receipt of your letter of the 26th, to which, indeed, I can add nothing material.

It will, as things stand, be imprudent to push the point of a further loan till the President arrives—for, though a majority of the directors are well disposed to the thing, they are afraid of Mr. *McCormick's* clamors and want the sanction of the President to control and counterbalance him. All, I am told, that can now be relied upon, is a postponement of the payment of the 200,000 dollars heretofore lent, to which Mr. McCormick assents.*

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, July 30, 1796.

SIR:

I have the pleasure to send you herewith a certain draft, which I have endeavored to make as perfect as my time and engagements would permit. It has been my object to render this act importantly and lastingly useful, and, avoiding all just cause of present exception, to embrace such reflections and sentiments as will wear well, progress in approbation with time, and redound to future reputation. How far I have succeeded, you will judge. I have begun the second part of the task—the digesting of the supplementary remarks to the first address,—which, in a fortnight, I hope also to send you; yet I confess the more I have considered the matter, the less eligible this plan has appeared to me. There seems to me to be a certain awkwardness in the thing, and it seems to imply that there is a doubt whether the assurance without the evidence would be believed. Besides that, I think that there are some ideas which will

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society. This letter, and those preceding on the same subject, give a curious idea of the conduct of the government and the scale of financial dealings in 1796 as compared with those of to-day.

not wear well in the former address, and I do not see how any part can be omitted, if it is to be given as the thing formerly prepared. Nevertheless, when you have both before you, you can judge. If you should incline to take the draft now sent, and after perusing and noting any thing that you wish changed, will send it to me, I will, with pleasure, shape it as you desire. This may also put it in my power to improve the expression, and perhaps, in some instances, condense. I rejoice that certain clouds have not lately thickened, and that there is a prospect of a brighter horizon.*

TO GREENLEAF.†

NEW YORK, July 30, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have carefully reflected upon the subject of your letter of the 27th instant.

Though the data which it presents authorize an expectation of large pecuniary advantage, and though I discern nothing in the affair which an individual differently circumstanced might not with propriety enter into, yet, in my peculiar situation, viewed in all its public, as well as personal relations, I think myself bound to decline the overture.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

August 3, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 1st. I deplore the picture it gives, and henceforth wish to forget there is a bank or a treasury in the United States, though I shall not forget my regard to individuals.

I do not see one argument in any possible shape of the thing, for the sale of bank stock, or against that of the other

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., 523.

† Greenleaf described himself as worth five millions, and in debt for twelve hundred thousand dollars. He offered, if Hamilton would help him, and lend him his name, to give a third of his property, and make him his partner in a banking-house.

stock, which does not apply *vice versa*, and I shall consider it as one of the most infatuated steps that ever was adopted.

It will be known on Thursday whether any thing is to be expected here.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

August 5, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

The Bank of New York is willing to make the loan of 324,000 dollars to you (I mean the exact sum of about this amount, if you desire it, which one of the laws you mention authorizes to borrow), on these terms: to advance all but 200,000 dollars when you please to advance the 200,000 dollars, by way of re-loan, when that sum, payable in October, becomes due. The term of credit to be, in each case, six months from the time of the advance. The interest, six per cent., with a deposit of stock (6 per cent.) at par, so placed as to permit the sale of it at the *market price*, if there be a failure of reimbursement at the stipulated periods. The treasury, upon honor, to draw immediately upon the bank as the money is wanted for expenditure, not to transfer it beforehand. On this point, sincerity and delicacy will be expected.

It was mentioned, too, as desirable, *though not made a condition*, that it should be understood that in case a real pressing emergency in the course of the winter should exist, the bank, on giving previous notice of the necessity to the Treasury might be at liberty to sell the stock at the then market price. The directors to be, *upon honor*, not to use this permission but in case of *real necessity*. Their *honor*, I know, may be entirely relied upon, and it may be well to gratify.

The deposit of stock was suggested by myself, upon your first letter. It is an ingredient in the negotiation which the bank values.*

The bank wishes a speedy decision.

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

TO WASHINGTON.

August 10, 1796.

SIR:

About a fortnight ago I sent you a certain draft. I now send you another on the plan of incorporation. Whichever you may prefer, if there be any part you wish to transfer from one to another, any part to be changed, or if there be any material idea in your own draft which has happened to be omitted, and which you wish introduced, in short, if there be any thing further in the matter in which I can be of any [service], I will, with great pleasure, obey your commands.*

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Sept. 4, 1796.

SIR:

I have received your two late letters, the last but one transmitting me a certain draft. It will be corrected and altered with attention to your suggestions, and returned by Monday's or Tuesday's post. The idea of the University is one of those which, I think, will be properly reserved for your speech at the opening of the session. A general suggestion respecting education will very fitly come into the address.†

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Sept. 4, 1796.

SIR:

I return the draft, corrected agreeably to your intimations. You will observe a short paragraph added respecting education. As to the establishment of a university, it is a point which, in connection with the military schools, and some other things, I meant, agreeably to your desire, to suggest to you as parts of your speech at the opening of the

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., p. 523. This letter, and those which follow, all relate to the preparation of the farewell address which was published September 17, 1796.

† Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., p. 529,

session. There will several things come there much better than in a general address to the people, which likewise would swell the address too much. Had I health enough, it was my intention to have written it over, in which case I would both have improved and abridged. But this is not the case. I seem now to have regularly a period of ill health every summer. I think it will be advisable simply to send the address by your secretary to Dunlap. It will, of course, find its way into all the other papers. Some person on the spot ought to be charged with a careful examination of the impression by the proof-sheet.*

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Sept. 8, 1796.

SIR:

I have received your letter of the 6th by the bearer. The draft was sent forward by the post on Tuesday.

I shall prepare a paragraph with respect to the University and some others for consideration respecting other points which have occurred.†

TO PHINEAS BOND.

NEW YORK, Sept. 15, 1796.

SIR:

Two days since a letter was delivered to me with a declaration of the bearer that it came from Mr. Lyston.‡ On opening the cover I found nothing except a letter from Captain Cochran (which, though not addressed, would appear to have been written to some public agent of Great Britain) and a declaration of David Wilson and Thomas Marshall respecting the ship *Eliza*. The superscription of the packet resembling your handwriting, I concluded that it might have come from you, and that by some mistake the letter you had written me had been omitted, and that on discovery of

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., p. 530.

† Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., p. 531.

‡ The British minister.

omission it would have been forwarded by another opportunity. Finding after two days' waiting that the expectation has not been realized, I have determined to write to you on the subject.

Mr. Charles Wilkes had previously applied to me concerning this affair, and had submitted to my consideration various papers. The result was that I discouraged a judicial prosecution. My reasons are these:

Taking it to be true, as stated, that Captain Huffey brought from *the shore within our territory* persons who, *by force*, aided him to rescue the captured vessel, I am of opinion that *this circumstance* would give jurisdiction of the case to our courts on the application of the capturing party.

But when on such application any of our courts should hold jurisdiction, it would in my judgment go into the merits and examine the validity of the capture.

Here these facts occur: that the *Eliza*, being a transport vessel in the service of Great Britain, was captured by a French privateer fitted out of some port of France by Barney, an American citizen, in quality of *armateur*—Levelle, probably a Frenchman, captain by commission, and was afterwards condemned as prize by the sentence of a Court of Admiralty at Dunkirk; and, as far as the direct proof goes, purchased in virtue of that sentence by an American citizen.

It is conjectured that two thirds of the vessel may have belonged to a French house—Messrs. De Baques—because it appears that Huffey paid two thirds of the purchase-money in a bill drawn by that house. But this is evidently a mere circumstance of suspicion, and wholly inconclusive. Why may not the De Baques have been factors or agents for Huffey? Why may not Huffey have purchased their draft towards the payment? One or the other of the two latter suppositions would no doubt prevail with the court if there was no collateral proof to the contrary.

It is also conjectured that the *Eliza* may have continued the property of Barney, but all the documents now in the

power of the captor speak a contrary language. This suspicion, then, however just it may be in fact, cannot be supported.

The question then is, would the equipment of the privateer by Barney be sufficient to invalidate the purchase by a neutral citizen under the sentence of a court of the capturing power?

No opinion of any theoretic writer, nor, as I believe, any usage of any nation, nor the decisions of courts of admiralty, will authorize, in my judgment, an affirmative answer to that question.

If Mr. Barney comes within the 21st article of our treaty with Great Britain, it would make him liable, if *taken by Great Britain*, to be punished *as a pirate*. But it will be observed that the stipulation would not oblige the United States to treat him as such. And the article being confined to personal punishment, may be supposed not to contemplate the confiscation of property captured by such a person.

But it would be to go an unheard-of length to pronounce null the prize made under such circumstances by a vessel fitted out of the ports of the belligerent power, and regularly commissioned, and after a sentence of condemnation.

Therefore, and as the property in question is of little value, and as smart damages would be likely to attend a failure of the prosecution, I advised against it, as I now still do.

Yet, if Captain Cochran, or any person acting on his behalf, shall *desire the experiment to be made*, however unpromising in my view, I shall esteem it a professional duty, and due to justice to a foreign power, to put the affair in a course of judicial investigation.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, Sept. 21, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Some time since Mr. McCormick spoke to me about the case of his kinsman, Mr. Pitcairn, whom Mr. Monroe had prevented from exercising the functions of consul. I can,

in justice, inform you that this gentleman is well considered in our city, and that his political principles have been understood to be very friendly to the French Revolution; nor have we any doubts that his sentiments towards our own government are altogether American, so that in truth there can be no shadow of political objection to him as to the office for which he was intended.*

TO ———.

1796.

Our excellent President, as you have seen, has declined a re-election. 'T is all-important to our country that his successor shall be a safe man. But it is far less important who of many men that may be named shall be the person, than that it shall not be Jefferson. We have every thing to fear if this man comes in, and from what I believe to be an accurate view of our political map I conclude that he has too good a chance of success, and that good calculation, prudence, and exertion were never more necessary to the Federal cause than at this very critical juncture. All personal and partial considerations must be discarded, and every thing must give way to the great object of excluding Jefferson. It appears to be a common opinion (and I think it a judicious one), that Mr. Adams and Mr. Pinckney (late minister to England) are to be supported on our side for President and Vice-President. New York will be unanimous for both. I hope New England will be so too. Yet I have some apprehensions on this point, lest the fear that he may outrun Mr. Adams should withhold votes from Pinckney. Should this happen, it will be, in my opinion, a most unfortunate policy. It will be to take one only instead of two chances against Mr. Jefferson, and, well weighed, there can be no doubt that the exclusion of Mr. Jefferson is far more important than any difference between Mr.

* Now first printed from the Pickering papers in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Adams and Mr. Pinckney. At foot, is my calculation of chances between Adams and Jefferson. 'T is too precarious. Pinckney has the chance of some votes southward and westward, which Adams has not. This will render our prospect in the main point, the exclusion of Jefferson, far better.

Relying on the strength of your mind, I have not scrupled to let you see the state of mine. I never was more firm in an opinion than in the one I now express, yet in acting upon it there must be much caution and reserve.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

ALBANY, Oct. 27, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 17th instant found me at Albany, attending the Supreme Court. I have no copy of the treaty with great Britain at hand, but I am well satisfied, from memory, that the true interpretation of the treaty, enforcing, in this respect, the true rule of neutrality, forbids our permitting the sale of a prize, taken and brought in by a *French national ship* equally as if by a privateer, and that the *prize vessel* herself, with her cargo, ought to depart our ports. I hasten to give you my opinion thus far. I reserve to consider more at leisure what exceptions absolute necessity may justify. But this is clear: that as far as it may admit any, the exception must be *measured* and *restricted* by the *necessity*, and as soon as possible you must return into the path of the treaty.

Thus, if the prize vessel was absolutely insufficient to proceed to sea, her cargo ought to be sent out of the country in another vessel, and care ought to be taken that it does not go out under false colors. Our own officers, no doubt, *must inspect* and *ascertain* any case of necessity which may be suggested.

Pray, my good friend, let there be no evasions.

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., 538.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: November 1, 1796.

I wrote you a line from Albany, expressing an opinion from *memory* that our treaty with Great Britain prohibited the sale of prizes made by French *national* ships. Being just returned to town, I have looked into the article which related to the point, and I *fear* that opinion was wrong. In a day or two I will write to you more particularly.

Adet's late communication demands a very *careful* and *well-managed* answer.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: November 3, 1796.

I have more carefully examined our treaty with Great Britain, and I return to the opinion given you from Albany. My hesitation yesterday arose from the terms of the twenty-fourth article, which were confined to *privateers*, a word that has an appropriate sense, meaning *ships of private persons commissioned to cruise.* But the following article contains the equivalent one to that with France, upon which we refused all bringing in and sale of prizes by her enemies. The words are, "no refuge," etc., the *major* including the *minor.* And though France, by our treaty with her, may *bring in* prizes, yet the treaty gives her *no right to sell.* The clause in question, in the English treaty, cannot take away the right she before had to *bring in* her prizes; but as she had not a positive right to sell, it will oblige her to *depart* with them: in other words, it will preclude her from whatever she has not a positive right to. This also is Mr. Jay's opinion, and it is certainly agreeable to the whole spirit of the treaty.

TO WASHINGTON.

SIR: November 4, 1796.

I have lately been honored with two letters from you, one from Mount Vernon, the other from Philadelphia, which came to hand yesterday. I immediately sent the last to Mr.

Jay, and conferred with him last night. We settled our opinion on one point, viz.: That whether Mr. Adet acted with or without instruction from his government in publishing his communication, he committed a disrespect towards our government, which ought not to pass *unnoticed*, and would most properly be *noticed* to him as the representative or agent. That the manner of noticing it, in the first instance, at least, ought to be *negative;* that is, by the personal conduct of the President towards the Minister. That the true rule on this point would be to receive the Minister at your levees with a *dignified reserve*, holding an *exact medium* between an *offensive coldness* and *cordiality*. The point is a nice one to be hit, but no one will know better how to do it than the President.

Self-respect and the necessity of discouraging further insult, requires that *sensibility* should be manifested; on the other hand, the importance of not widening a breach, which may end in rupture, demands great *measure* and *caution* in the mode.

Mr. Jay and myself are both agreed also, that no immediate publication of the reply which may be given ought to be made, for this would be like joining in *an appeal* to the public—would countenance and imitate the irregularity, and would not be dignified; nor is it necessary for any present purpose of the government. Mr. Jay *inclined* to think that the reply ought to go through Mr. Pinckney to the Directory, with only a short note to Adet, acknowledging the reception of his paper and informing him that this mode will be taken. I am not yet satisfied that this course will be best. We are both to consider further, and confer. You will shortly be informed of the result.

But whatever be the mode adopted, it is certain that the reply will be one of the most delicate papers that has proceeded from our government, in which it will require much care and nicety to steer between *sufficient* and too *much justification*, between *self-respect* and *provocation* of further insult or injury; and that will at the same time save a great

political interest which this step of the French Government opens to us. Did I not know how guarded you will yourself be, I should be afraid of Mr. Pickering's *warmth*. We must, if possible, avoid a rupture with France, who, if not effectually checked, will, in the insolence of power, become no less troublesome to us than to the rest of the world.

I dedicate *Sunday* to the execution of your commands in preparing certain heads. You will speedily hear again from me.

TO WASHINGTON.

November 5, 1796.

SIR:

Yesterday, after the departure of the post, I received your letter of the 3d. I have since seen the answer to *Adet*. I perceive in it nothing intrinsically exceptionable, but some thing in the manner a little epigrammatical and *sharp*. I make this remark freely, because the card now to be played is perhaps the most delicate that has occurred in our administration, and nations, like individuals, sometimes get into squabbles from the manner more than the matter that passes between them. It is all-important to us—first, if possible, to avoid rupture with France; secondly, if that cannot be, to evince to the people that there has been an unequivocal disposition to avoid it. Our discussions, therefore, ought to be *calm, smooth*, inclined to the argumentative; when remonstrance and complaint are unavoidable, carrying upon the face of them a *reluctance* and *regret*, mingling a steady assertion of our rights and adherence to principle with the language of moderation, and, as long as it can be done, of friendship.

I am the more particular in these observations, because I know that Mr. Pickering, who is a very worthy man, has nevertheless some thing warm and angular in his temper, and will require much a vigilant, moderating eye.

I last evening saw Doctor Bailey, our health officer, who tells me that the French Consul here, in conversation with

an assistant of the doctors, who is a refugee from St. Domingo, expressed a desire to make arrangements for the sick of a French fleet expected shortly to arrive at this port. I thought this circumstance worth communication.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

November 9, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I received yesterday your letter of the 6th, and immediately wrote some additional letters to the eastward, enforcing what I had before written. Pennsylvania does not surprise me.

I have reconsidered the opinion given to you on the third, and see no reason to change it. The reasoning which leads me to the conclusion, has not been sufficiently explained, I will therefore be more particular.

The articles in our treaty with France, which respect the subject, are the seventeenth and twenty-second.

The seventeenth consists of two parts.

First.—It grants *asylum* in our ports for French ships of war and *privateers, with their prizes;* and with liberty *to carry them freely thence to their own ports.*

Secondly.—It prohibits the giving refuge, in our ports, *to such as shall have made prize of the subjects, or property, of the French.* It grants no right to sell prizes in our ports, neither does the *letter* of the article prohibit *prizes*, made of the French, from coming into our ports. It only prohibits *the instrument* of making the prizes. But the construction justly adopted by the President was, that the prohibition, in its true spirit, excluded the *bringing in of prizes*, whether coming with, or without, the capturing vessels. 'T is upon this part of the treaty, alone, that prizes made by *national vessels* of Great Britain, were excluded from our ports. For,—

The twenty-second article with France is wholly confined to *privateers;* prohibiting those of other nations *to fit* or to sell their *prizes* in our ports.

This article, had it stood alone, would have left us as free

to admit British *national* ships, with *their prizes*, into our ports, as our twenty-fourth article with Great Britain leaves us free to admit French national ships, with their prizes. For these articles are the exact equivalents of each other. So that, as before remarked, the prohibition of the *coming in*, or *sale in*, our ports, of *prizes made upon the French by British national ships*, was derived, by *construction* and *implication*, from the seventeenth article of our treaty with France.

It follows, that this article was considered as competent to prevent the *coming in and sale* of prizes.

If so, the same, or equivalent, terms in the British treaty, must be competent to the same thing.

Now the twenty-fifth article of our treaty with Great Britain has equivalent terms. We there read, that "no shelter or refuge shall be given in their ports to *such as have made a* prize upon the subjects, or citizens, of either of the contracting parties; but if forced, by stress of weather or the danger of the sea, to enter therein, particular care shall be taken to hasten their departure; and to cause them to retire as soon as possible." This prohibition includes here, as in the seventeenth article of our treaty with France, a prohibition to sell prizes in our ports; not the *prizes* of *privateers only*, but prizes generally.

But France, it is answered, had a prior right, by the seventeenth article of our treaty with her, "to come and bring prizes into our ports."

True, she had this right, and must have it still, notwithstanding the twenty-fifth article of our treaty with Great Britain: but she had no prior right, by treaty, *to sell prizes* in our ports; and consequently, as the twenty-fifth article of our treaty with Great Britain excludes, as the *minor* of a *major*, the selling of prizes in our ports, the exclusion, so far, is in force, because it contravenes no *prior right* of France. As far as the treaty with France gives a right, inconsistent with the above twenty-fifth article, that right forms an exception; but the exception must be only co-extensive with the right. The conclusion is that France retains the right

of *asylum*, but is excluded from the right of selling. This gives effect to the twenty-fifth article with Great Britain, so far as the treaty-right of France does not require an exception.

And this construction ought to be favored, because it best comports with the rule of neutrality.

It will also best agree with the President's former decisions. He permitted France to sell prizes; not because treaty gave her a right, but because he did not see clearly any law of the country, or of nations, that forbids it. But consistency does not require that this permission shall continue, if there be any thing in the treaty with Great Britain against it. Consistency, however, does require that the same latitude of construction should be given to the twenty-fifth article of our treaty with Great Britain, as was before given to the seventeenth article of our treaty with France. The same latitude will, as I apprehend, exclude the sale of prizes, by France, in the case in question. .

I regret extremely the publication of the reply to Adet, otherwise than through the channel of Congress. The sooner the Executive gets out of the newspapers the better. What may now be in its power, will depend on circumstances which *are to occur*.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Nov. 10, 1796.

SIR:

I have been employed in making, and have actually completed a rough draft on the following heads: "*National University; Military Academy; Board of Agriculture;* establishment of such manufactories on *public account* as are relative to the equipment of army and navy, *to the extent of the public demand for supply*, and excluding all the branches already well established in the country; the *gradual* and *successive* creation of a navy; compensations to public officers; *reinforcement* of provision for public debt." I send you this enumeration, that you may see the objects which I

shall prepare for. But I must beg your patience till the beginning of the next week for the transmission of the draft, as I am a good deal pressed for time.

The Legislature having appointed Mr. Lawrence district judge, a successor will of course be to be provided. A conviction of his competency, a high opinion of his worth, and a long-established personal friendship, induce me to take the liberty of *precipitating* a recommendation to you of Mr. *Troup*, the present clerk of the District and Circuit Court (the attorney of the district being known to be disinclined to the office). Mr. Troup is a lawyer, professionally very respectable, so that his practice is inferior in productiveness to no other; but he has by the most unexceptionable means acquired a property sufficient to make it reasonable in him to withdraw from practice, upon a salary such as that of the district judge, and latterly his health has somewhat suffered from a long course of *excessive application.* His moral character is without an imputation of any sort; indeed, no man in the State is better esteemed than this gentleman; so that, I believe the appointment would be considered as altogether fit. I trust, however, that in expressing myself thus strongly, it will not occasion to you a moment's embarrassment, if any candidate more agreeable to you shall occur.

TO WASHINGTON.

November 11, 1796.

SIR:

My anxiety for such a course of things as will most promise a continuance of peace to the country, and in the contrary event a full justification of the President, has kept my mind dwelling on the late reply to Mr. Adet; and, though it is a thing that cannot be undone, yet, if my ideas are correct, the communication of them may not be wholly useless for the future. The more I have considered the paper, the less I like it.

I think it is to be regretted that answers were not given to the preceding communications of Mr. Adet. For silence

commonly carries with it the appearance of *hauteur* and *contempt*. And even if the paper to be answered is offensive, 't is better and less hazardous to harmony to say so, with calmness and moderation, than to say nothing. Silence is only then to be adopted when things have come to such a state with a minister, that it is the intention to break with him. And even in this case, if there is still a disposition to maintain harmony with his government, a reply ought to go through our own organ to it, so as to distinguish between the minister and the government.

The reason given for not having answered the inquiry respecting the impressment of our seamen is too broad. When two nations have relations to each other, and one is at war, the other at peace, if the one at peace suffers liberties to be taken with it by the enemy of the one at war, which turns to the detriment of the latter, it is a fair subject of inquiry and discussion. The questions may be asked: How does this happen? What measures are taking to prevent a repetition or continuance? There is always possibility of connivance, and this possibility gives a right to inquire, and imposes an obligation to enter into friendly explanation. 'T is not a matter of indifference to our friend, what conduct of its enemy we permit towards ourselves. Much indeed in all these cases depends on the manner of the inquiry; but I am satisfied the principle is as I state it, and the ground assumed by Mr. Pickering, in the latitude of the expression, untenable.

These opinions are not confined to me. Though most people like the air of what is called spirit in Mr. Pickering's letter, yet some of the best friends of the cause whisper cautiously remarks similar to the above.

It is a question now well worth considering, whether, if a handsome opportunity of rectifying should not occur with Mr. Adet, it may not be expedient, specially to instruct Mr. Pinckney, to make the explanations, putting our backwardness here to the score of the manner of the inquiry, and qualifying the generality of our principle—without giving up our

right of judging of the measure of our compliance in similar cases.

I know you will so well appreciate the motives to these observations, that I run no risk in being thought officious, and I therefore freely transmit them, being always, etc.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Nov. 19, 1796.

SIR:

I duly received your letter of the 12th instant. My avocations have not permitted me sooner to comply with your desire. I have looked over the papers, and suggested alterations and corrections; and I have also numbered the paragraphs, I., II., III., etc., in the order in which it appears to me eligible they should stand in the speech.

I thought, upon full reflection, you could not avoid an allusion to your retreat, in order to express your sense of the support of Congress, but that the simplest manner of doing it was to be preferred. A paragraph is offered accordingly.

I believe the commencement of a navy ought to be contemplated. Our fiscal concerns, if Congress please, can easily be rendered efficient; if not, 't is their fault, and ought not to prevent any suggestion which the interest of the country may require.

The paragraph in your letter respecting our Mediterranean commerce may well be incorporated in this part of the communication.

You will observe a paragraph I have framed contemplates a full future communication of our situation with France. At present it seems to me that this will be effected in the following mode:

Let a full reply to Mr. Adet's last communication be made, containing a particular review of our conduct and motives from the commencement of the Revolution. Let this be sent to Mr. Pinckney, to be imparted to the Directory; and let a copy of it, with a short auxiliary statement

of facts, if necessary, be sent to the House of Representatives. As Mr. Adet has suspended his functions, I presume no reply can be made to him; but, not having seen his paper, I cannot judge.

The crisis is immensely important to the glory of the President, and to the honor and interest of the country.

It is all-important that the reply to Adet's last communication, to whomsoever made, should be managed with the utmost possible prudence and skill, so that it may be a solid justification—an inoffensive remonstrance—the expression of a dignified seriousness—reluctant to quarrel, but resolved not to be humbled. The subject excites the greatest anxiety.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

November 22, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your note sending me Adet's letter. The present is, in my opinion, as critical a situation as our government has been in, requiring all its prudence, all its wisdom, all its moderation, all its firmness.

Though the thing is now passed, I do not think it useless to say to you that I was not well pleased with the Secretary of State's answer to Adet's note communicating the order respecting neutral vessels. There was some thing of hardness and epigrammatic sharpness in it. Neither did I think the position true that France had no right to inquire respecting the affair of seamen. I am of opinion that whenever a neutral power suffers liberties to be taken with it by a belligerent one, which turns to the detriment of the other party, *as the acquiring strength by impressing our seamen*, there is a good ground of inquiry, demanding candid explanation.

My opinion is, that our communication should be *calm*, *reasoning*, and *serious*, showing steady resolution more than feeling, having force in the idea rather than in the expression.

I am very anxious that our government should do right on the present occasion.

My ideas are these:

As Adet has declared his functions suspended, the reply ought not to be to him, but through Mr. Pinckney to the Directory.

It ought to contain a review of our conduct from the beginning, noticing our first and full acknowledgment of the Republic, and the danger we ran by it. Also the dangers we incurred by other large interpretations of the treaty in favor of France, adverting to the sale of prizes.

It should meet all the suggestions of the Minister, correct his misstatements of facts, and meet, argumentatively, his principles. Where arguments already used are repeated, it ought to be in a new language, or by quotations in the body of the reply, not by reference to other communications annexed, or otherwise, which embarrass the reading and attention.

It should review calmly the conduct of France and her agents, pointing out fully and clearly the violations of our rights, and the spirit which was manifested, but in terms the most cautious and inoffensive.

It should advert to the policy of moderation towards the enemies of France, which our situation and that of France, especially as to maritime power, imposed upon us.

It should briefly recapitulate the means of obtaining redress from Great Britain employed by our government, and the effects they have produced.

It should explain why the government could not adopt more *expeditious* modes; why the Executive could not control the Judiciary, and should show that, in effect, the opposite party, as well as France, suffered the inconveniences of delay.

It should make prominent the consequences upon the peace and friendship of governments, if all accidental infractions from situation, from the negligences, etc., of particular officers, are to be imputed with severity to the government itself, and should apply the remark to the case of the injuries we have suffered, in different ways, from the officers and agents of France.

It should make prominent two ideas: the situation in which we were with Great Britain prior to the last treaty, so as to show that, by the *laws* of nations, as *admitted* to us and *declared* to France and the world, prior to that treaty, all the things complained of as resulting from that treaty previously existed. And it should dwell on the exception, in that treaty, of prior treaties.

It should point out strongly the idea that the inconvenience at particular junctures of particular stipulations is no reason for one party superseding them, but should intimate that the President is willing to review the *relations* between the two countries, and, by a new treaty, if the same shall be approved by the Senate, to readjust the terms of those *relations*.

The article in the treaty with France respecting an admission of the same privileges which are granted to other powers should be examined. This plainly means where there is any *concession* of a positive privilege which the United States were free to refuse, not where there is a mere recognition of the principles of the laws of nations.

It should be made prominent that the United States have always wished, and still wish, to cultivate the most amicable relations, and are still disposed to evince this disposition by every method in their power; that in what they said they mean only to show that they have acted in sincerity and good faith, and have rather received than given cause to complain; that they have been disposed to make a candid construction of circumstances which might seem inconsistent with a friendly conduct in France, and claim a similar candor in the estimate of their situation and conduct.

There should be an animadversion upon the unfitness of looking beyond the government to the citizens.

And there should be these ideas, properly couched: that the United States cannot admit that a just cause of resentment has been given; that they appeal from the misapprehension which dictated this sentiment to the justice and magnanimity of France, for a retraction of it, and for meet-

ing them freely in the complete restoration of a friendly intercourse; that France will not deliberately expect that they could make a sacrifice of self-respect, since she must be sensible that a free people ought, in every event, to cherish it as a sacred duty, and to encounter with firmness every danger and calamity which an attempt to make them forget it, or degrade them from their independent character, may involve.

This would be the general complexion of the reply which I would give. The manner should be extremely cautious, smooth, even friendly, but yet solemn and dignified.

The alliance, in its future operation, must be against our interest. The door to escape from it is opened. Though we ought to maintain with good faith our engagements, if the conduct of the other party releases us, we should not refuse the release, so far as we may accept without compromitting our peace. This idea is very important.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

December 6, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

The president of the Bank of New York called upon me yesterday and manifested considerable anxiety about the state of the bank. It seems the course of things lately and their large accommodations to the Government have produced a balance against them in favor of the office of discount at this place, which has lately called for 100,000 dollars in specie and it is apprehended may speedily call for more.

The president mentioned this situation generally, with only this view, to show that the bank would probably be under the necessity of selling the stock pledged with them, if the government should not be punctual. It was at the same time declared that nothing but necessity would lead to any measure inconvenient to the government, yet it was thought advisable to admonish of the probable necessity.

A director two or three days since also mentioned to me that there was a sum of about 26,000 dollars of interest due

to the bank, of which an account had been rendered, but which was not paid, adding that in the present situation every little would help. Observations like these are of course confidential. But the situation requires, and it will make it good policy that, if in your power, you should come to the aid of the Bank of New York. It would be wise, if possible, to anticipate a particular payment. It will be also useful to arrest for a time too free calls from the office.

Friendly attention and good offices on your part will inspire confidence and embolden the bank to assist in future emergencies, and it is very much the policy of the Treasury not to be exclusively dependent on one institution.

P. S.—Let me hear from you on this subject. What is doing with Adet?

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, Dec. 16, 1796.

I have received, my dear sir, your several letters of the 25th of August, 10th and 11th of September. You know my sentiments towards you too well to ascribe my delay in answering them to any other cause than the imperiousness of avocations with which I could not dispense.

Public opinion, taking the country at large, has continued since you left us to travel on a right direction, and, I trust, will not easily deviate from it. You will have seen before this reaches you Mr. Adet's communications. We conjecture, as to the timing of them, that they were intended to influence the election of president by the apprehension of war with France. We suppose also they are designed in the same way to give support to the partisans of France, and that they have for eventual object the placing things in just such a state as will leave France at liberty to slide easily either into a renewal of cordiality or an actual or virtual war with the United States. If the war of Europe continues, the efforts of France will be likely to be levelled as a primary object against the commerce and credit of Great

Britain; and to injure these, she may think it advisable to make war upon our trade,—forgetting perhaps that the consequence may be to turn it more entirely into the channels of Great Britain. These reflections will be obvious to you. I only make them to apprise you of the view which is taken of the subject here. Thus far appearances do not indicate that the purpose of influencing the country has been obtained. I think, in the main, the effect has been to impress the necessity of adhering more firmly to the government.

You need not be told that every exertion not degrading to us will be made to preserve peace with France. Many of the opposite party, however they may be pleased with appearances of ill-humor in France, will not wish to go to the length of war. And we shall endeavor to avoid it in pursuance of our general plan of preserving peace with all the world. Yet you may depend that we shall not submit to be dictated to, or to be forced into a departure from our plan of neutrality, unless to repel an attack upon us.

Our anxiety has been extreme on the subject of the election for president. If we may trust our information, which we have every reason to trust, it is now decided that neither Jefferson nor Burr can be president. It must be either Adams or Pinckney—the first most probably. By the throwing away of votes in New England, lest Pinckney should outrun Adams, it is not unlikely that Jefferson will be vice-president. The event will not a little mortify Burr. Virginia has given him only one vote.

It was expected of course that the Senate's answer to the President would be flattering to him. But the speech in the House of Representatives has been better than was expected. An address, which I have not seen, but stated by our friends to be a very good one, has passed the House with only twelve dissenting, consisting of the most fiery spirits. The address is not only generally complimentary to the President, but includes, it is said, an *explicit approbation of his administration*, which caused the division. Edward Livingston is in the minority.

After giving you these consolatory accounts, I am now to dash the cup a little by telling you that Livingston is in all probability re-elected in this city. The principal cause has been an unacceptable candidate on our part—*James Watson.* There were four gentlemen who would certainly have succeeded, but none of them would accept. In Watson we could not unite opinions. He was more disagreeable than I had supposed to a large body of our friends, and yet, after the declining of the persons alluded to, we could not do otherwise than support him; for he had gotten a strong hold upon most of the leading mechanics who act with us. But in the State at large we shall better our representation, and I hope for a majority in the House of Representatives. As an omen of this there are several new members in Congress from different States who hitherto vote with our friends.

The favorable change in the conduct of Great Britain towards us strengthens the hands of the friends of order and peace. It is much to be desired that a treatment in all respects unexceptionable from that quarter should obviate all pretext to inflame the public mind.

We are laboring hard to establish in this country principles more and more *national* and free from all foreign ingredients, so that we may be neither "Greeks nor Trojans," but truly Americans.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Dec. 21, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I did not understand by your letter of the 17th of November whether you meant or not to authorize the immediate commencement of the sale of stock. If you think this measure will become indispensable, it may be well to anticipate the execution; though, indeed, sales of stock are at this juncture nearly impracticable. Yet I imagine it will be agreeable to the bank to have permission to anticipate.

A very prudent letter has lately been written by the president of the Bank of the United States to the Office of Discount here, among other things advising a *reduction* of the balance due from the Bank of New York to 100,000 dollars. This letter, which in my opinion leaves, as it ought to do, to the directors of the office here, discretion to execute the idea with due regard to circumstances, has, however, been construed by them in too peremptory a light; and accordingly they have drawn from the Bank of New York pretty rapidly 150,000 dollars, which begets an apprehension that subsequent calls may be equally rapid, and, exciting fear and jealousy, is likely to produce too sudden a retrenchment of the business of the Bank of New York. And as the office, being confined, as they suppose, to discounting twice their capital, cannot, by increased accommodations, fill the void, there is danger of stagnating and convulsing the business of the city so as to give a shock to credit. The directors here are sensible of the danger, but several of them take the intimation from Philadelphia in too strict a sense, and cannot resolve to alleviate the apprehensions of the Bank of New York.

Though the Bank of New York has reduced and is reducing its discounts, there are circumstances of the moment which continue to incline the balance in favor of the office, but it is easy to see, taking in the payments of the government in February, that there will be a natural change, and consequently it is every way imprudent to force them.

If the last loan of the Bank of New York to government had no other use than that which you *hint*, this still was very important. And it is interesting all round that a disposition should exist to repeat similar accommodations. But you easily see how cautious and disaffected spirits are armed against it when they can say, "We told you that you would embarrass yourself by your loan to government," and in truth if this had not been made the Bank of New York would now stand on high ground.

Pray interpose with Mr. Willing to obtain an explanatory

letter leaving more clearly the *time* and *manner* of accomplishing the reduction of the present balance to their discretion.

I will say nothing more of an anticipated payment, but if this were practicable to the extent of 50,000 or 100,000 dollars it would be consolatory to the directors and leave the residue more to your convenience.

Don't derive from this letter any source of alarm. Every thing is sound with both banks here. I know the state of both. But there is danger that *fear* and *jealousy* in the directors of the Bank of New York may produce evil which it is unnecessary to hazard. I wish to see your report on direct taxes.

I shall send you, the first opportunity, the volume of "Reports of Courts."

P. S.—Mr. Caleb Brewster is a candidate for the office of first mate in the revenue cutter here. I remember he rendered very meritorious services in the war, and I am told has been bred a seaman. In these respects he has a good claim. His character otherwise is not known to me. But if it affords no objection, I think he will be an eligible man.

It is said Walker is to resign. In this case Jonathan Burrall wishes to succeed. There cannot, you know, be a more fit man, and he will be entirely acceptable here.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

December 23, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I wrote to you two days ago on the subject of obtaining an instruction from the Bank of the United States to the direction of the office here to prevent a speedy repetition of these calls on the Bank of New York. This bank has so large a proportion of its whole capital in the power of the office that, if it be not tranquillized on the

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers, in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

subject of demands from that quarter, it will be driven to such violent operations as cannot fail to convulse credit, and, among other evils, prevent the collection of the revenues. The danger is urgent, and a prompt explanation is essential.

The situation of the Bank of New York is, no doubt, materially owing to the prolongation of the old and the new loan to government. Its capital is 900,000 dollars; its discount, 1,600,000. Here is certainly no imprudence.

Many of the merchants here are anxious for an accommodation for the duties similar to that which I upon certain trying occasions made. I know not what is possible on your part.*

TO WILLIAM SMITH.

1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received your letter of the ——. Though I do not like in some respects the answer of the House to the speech, yet I frankly own that I had no objection to see it softened down. For I think there is no use in *hard words*—and in public proceedings would almost always unite the *suaviter in modo* with the *fortiter in re.*

But I must regret that there is no prospect of the *fortiter in re.* I perceive clearly that your measures will wear upon the whole the aspect of *resentment*, without means or energy sufficient to repel injury. Our country will be first ruined, and then we shall begin to think of defending ourselves.

I will not enter much into detail, but I will observe that instead of three frigates of thirty-two, I would prefer an increase of the number of cutters. Surely twenty of these cannot embarrass the most squeamish, and less than this number will be useless.

But from all I can see you will have no revenue. Overdriven theory everywhere palsies the operations of our government, and renders all rational *practice* impossible.

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers, in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

My ideas of revenue would be:

A tax on buildings	$1,000,000
Stamp tax, including perfumeries—a percentage on policies of insurance—on collateral successions to real and personal estate—on *hats* —say	500,000
5 cents for the worst, 10 for the middling, and 20 for the best saddle-horses	150,000
Salt, so as to make the whole 25 per cent. . .	350,000
	$2,000,000

I have explained my ideas of the house tax to Wolcott and Sedgwick.

It is to take certain *criteria* of different buildings, and annex to them *ratios*, not *rates*. (What I gave to Sedgwick as *rates* may serve as *ratios*.) Then apportion the tax among the States, and distribute the quota of each among the individuals according to ratios. The aggregate of the ratios will represent the quota of the State—then, as that aggregate is to be the sum of the quota, so will *be the sum of the ratios* of each building to the tax to be paid by each individual.

I am told an objection will arise from the negro houses in the South. Surely there is no impracticability in annexing *ratios* to them which will be proportional to their taxable value. This plan will avoid the worst of all inconveniences —arbitrary valuations; and will avoid the embarrassment for the present of a land tax, will be also consistent with expedition. I entertain no doubt it can be adjusted so as to be free from any material objection. The smallness of the tax will render any material inequality impossible. You cannot compute fewer than six hundred thousand houses, which, at an average, would be about a dollar and a half a house. The proportions of the better houses on the proposed plan would make the tax fall light on the inferior and country houses, which is desirable for recommending the first essay; nor would any house I am persuaded h[illegible] to

pay ten dollars. What room for serious objection? You then lay a foundation for an annual million on real property, which will become a permanent accession to your revenue; whereas you will feel an endless embarrassment about agreeing upon any tax on lands.

TO ———.

1797.

You seem to be of opinion to defer to a future period the commencement of direct taxation. I acknowledge I am inclined to lay hold of it now. The leaders (Findley, Gallatin, Madison, Nicholas) of the opposite party favor it now perhaps with no good design. But it will be well to take them while in the humor, and make them share the responsibility. This will be the more easy, as they are inclined to take the lead. Our external affairs are so situated, that it seems to me indispensable to open new springs of revenue, and press forward our little naval preparation, and be ready for augmenting it.

I have been reading the report of the Secretary of the Treasury on this subject. I think it does him credit. The general principles and objects are certainly good; nor am I sure that any thing better can be done. I remember that I once promised you to put in writing my ideas on the subject. I intended to have done it, and communicated them to the Secretary. My hurry and press of business prevented me, but I concluded lately to devote an evening to a rude sketch and to send it to you. You may show it to the Secretary and confer. If, in the course of the thing, it can be useful to the general end we all have in view, it will give me pleasure. If not, there will have been but little time misspent. Of course, no use will be made of it in contradiction to the views of the Treasury department.

As to the part which relates to land, I do not feel any strong preference of my plan to that in report; for this, in my opinion, ought to be considered only as an auxiliary, and not as the pith of the tax. But I have a strong preference

of my plan of a house tax to that in the report. These are my reasons: It is more comprehensive, embracing all houses, and will be proportionally more productive. It is more certain, avoiding the evasions and partialities to which valuations will forever be liable, and I think is for that reason likely to be at least as equal. I entertain no doubt that the rules of rates, adapted as they are to characterize circumstances, will in fact be more favorable to equality than appraisements. I think the idea of taxing only houses of above a certain annual value will be dissatisfactory. The comparison of the proprietors of houses immediately above with those immediately below the line will beget discontent, and the errors of valuation will increase it. I think there will be a great advantage in throwing the weight of the tax on houses, as well because lands are more difficult to manage, as because it will fall in a manner less dissatisfactory. I would not bear hard in this way. I would add, as aid, the taxes contemplated last session on stamps, collateral successions —new modifications of some articles of imports, and, let me add, saddle-horses. The idea of taxing slaves generally will not work well. If confined to all menial servants for luxury, as coachmen, footmen, cooks, etc., it would be eligible.*

TO WILLIAM SMITH.

January 19, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Mrs. De Neufville, widow of Mr. De Neufville,† formerly of Holland, is on her way to Philadelphia to solicit the kindness of Congress in virtue of services rendered the American cause by her husband. You probably know their history, as South Carolina was particularly concerned. From what I have heard, it seems to me her pretensions, on the score of her husband, to the kindness of this country, are strong; as a distressed and amiable woman, she has a claim to everybody's kindness.

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vi., 592.

† See above to Washington, January 19, 1796.

What are you about in Congress? Our affairs seem to be at a very critical point with France. We seem to be brought to the same point with her as we were with Great Britain when Mr. Jay was sent there. One last effort of negotiation to produce accommodation and redress, or measures of self-defence. Have you any thoughts of an embargo? There may be erelong a necessity for it. Are you in earnest about the additional revenue? this is very necessary.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

January 20, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I received your late letter in due time. You seem to be of opinion to defer to a future period the commencement of direct taxation. I acknowledge I am inclined to lay gently hold of it now. Leaders of the opposite party favor it now, perhaps, with no good design. But it will be well to take them while in the humor, and make them share the responsibility. This will be the more easy as they are inclined to take the lead. Our external affairs are so situated, that it seems to me indispensable to open new springs of revenue, and press forward our little naval preparation, and be ready for augmenting it. But, on the whole, I have always leaned to the opinion that *half a million* from direct taxes was not enough to begin with, nor should I have proposed more.

What are we to do with regard to our good allies? Are we to leave our commerce a free prey to them? I hope not. It seems to me we are even beyond the point at which we were with Great Britain when Mr. Jay was sent thither, and that some thing like a similar plan ought to be pursued—that is, we ought to make a final effort to accommodate, and then resort to measures of defence. I believe *erelong* an embargo on *our own vessels* will be advisable—to last till the conduct of France changes, or till it is ascertained it will not change. In the last event, the following system may be adopted: to grant special letters of *marque*, with authority to repel aggressors and capture *assailants*; to

equip our frigates; to arm a number of *sloops-of-war* of existing vessels to convoy our merchantmen. This may be a middle term of general hostility, though it may slide into the latter. Yet, in this case, it may be well to let France make the progress. But at all events we must protect our commerce and save our honor.

As to the balance business, the agitation has been every way unfortunate. There is not an *individual* in the State of New York who is not profoundly convinced that the settlement was *wholly artificial*, and as it regarded the rule of quoting, manifestly unjust, and consequently, that there is no justice in paying it. I never saw but one mode of getting through the business, which is for Congress to call for a certain sum of each debtor State annually, say a *fiftieth* part, declaring that if not paid, each instalment shall bear interest from the time it becomes due, but till then the principal to carry no interest. I believe the State for harmony's sake would yield to such an arrangement. It may be said this will be only a nominal payment. I answer, true, but an *artificial balance* ought only to be *nominally* paid. The conduct of some gentlemen in the late question has pained me much. It is inconsistent with a tacit pledge of faith. Every New Yorker who had any thing to do with our fiscal arrangements has been personally compromised.

TO WASHINGTON.

January 22, 1797.

SIR:

The sitting of the court and an uncommon pressure of business have unavoidably delayed an answer to your last favor. I have read with attention Mr. Pickering's letter. It is, in the main, a substantial and satisfactory paper—will, in all probability, do considerable good in enlightening public opinion at home, and I do not know that it contains any thing which will do harm elsewhere. It wants, however, in various parts, that management of expression and *sauviter in modo* which a man more used to diplomatic communi-

cations could have given it, and which would have been happy if united with its other merits.

I have reflected as maturely as time has permitted on the idea of an extraordinary mission to France, and, notwithstanding the objections, I rather incline to it under some shape or other. As an imitation of what was done in the case of Great Britain, it will argue to the people equal solicitude. To France it will have a similar aspect (for Pinckney will be considered there as a mere substitute in ordinary course to Mr. Monroe), and will in some degree soothe her pride. The influence on party, if a man in whom the opposition has confidence is sent, will be considerable in the event of non-success; and it will be to France a bridge over which she may more easily retreat.

The best form of the thing, in my view, is a commission including three persons, who may be called commissioners plenipotentiary and extraordinary. Two of these should be Mr. Madison and Mr. Pinckney; a third may be taken from the Northern States, and I know of none better than Mr. *Cabot*, who, or any *two* of whom, may be empowered to act.

Mr. Madison will have the confidence of the French and of the opposition. Mr. *Pinckney* will have *some thing* of the same advantage in an inferior degree. Mr. *Cabot*, without being able to prevent their doing what is right, will be a salutary check upon too much Gallicism, and his *real* commercial knowledge will supply their want of it. Besides that, he will enjoy the confidence of all the friends of the Administration. His disposition to preserve peace is ardent and unqualified.

This plan, too, I think, will consist with all reasonable attention to Mr. Pinckney's feelings.

Or (which, however, I think less eligible) Mr. Madison and Mr. Pinckney only may be joint commissioners, without a third person. Mr. Cabot, if appointed without being consulted, will, I think, certainly go. If not, the other two may act without him.

The power to the commissioners will be to adjust amicably mutual compensations and the compensations which may be

due by either party, and to revise and remodify the *political* and *commercial relations* of the two countries.

In the exercise of their power they must be restrained by *precise* instructions to do nothing inconsistent with our other existing treaties, or with the *principles* of construction of those with France adopted by our executive government, as declared in its public acts and communications; and nothing to extend our *political* relations in respect to alliance, but to endeavor to get rid of the mutual guaranty in the treaty, or, if that shall be impracticable, to stipulate *specific succors* in lieu of it, as so many troops, so many ships, so much money, etc.; strictly confining the *casus fœderis to future defensive wars*, after a general and complete pacification terminating the present war, and defining offensive war to be, where there is either a full declaration of war against the ally, or a *first* commission of *actual* hostility on the territory or property of the ally by invasion or capture. As to commerce, with the above restrictions, there may be full discretion. These are merely inaccurate outlines.

Unless Mr. *Madison* will go, there is scarcely another character that will afford advantage.

Cogent motives of public utility must prevail over personal considerations. Mr. Pinckney may be told, in a private letter from you, that this is an unavoidable concession to the pressure of public exigency and the state of *internal parties*.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

January 23, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I remember that very early in the day, and prior to any act of Great Britain, the French passed a decree violating, with regard to all the neutral powers, the principle of *free ships, free goods*, and I think making provisions liable to seizure. This decree was afterwards rescinded as to America—then again revived, and then again revoked. I want copies of these decrees for a particular purpose useful to the government, and presuming they must be on the files

of your department, you will oblige me much by letting me have copies as speedily as may be convenient.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Feb. 6, 1797.

I duly received your letter of the 23d of January, with its enclosure, for which I am much obliged to you. I have read it with great pleasure. It is a substantial, satisfactory paper; will do good in this country; and as to France, I presume events will govern there.

Is it not proper to call upon the merchants to furnish your department with statements and proofs of the spoliations which we have suffered from the French, as was done when the English were in their mischievous career?

I received your other letter with certain enclosures.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

DEAR SIR: February 10, 1797.

If I recollect right, Chancellor Livingston, while Secretary of Foreign Affairs, reported a censure upon our commissioners who made the peace with Great Britain, for not obeying their instructions with regard to France. Will you favor me in confidence with the real state of this business? I was at the time a member of Congress. It was immediately on the arrival of the provisional articles.

I hope, my dear sir, *effectual measures* are taking to bring us to some issue with France to ascertain whether her present plan is to be persisted in or abandoned. For, surely, our commerce ought not to be thus an undefended prey.

TO RUFUS KING.

MY DEAR SIR: February 15, 1797.

Give me leave to recall to your recollection and acquaintance Mr. De Galon the bearer of this, who, as he informs me, goes to Europe on private business. I need not ob-

serve that he is an interesting man, as you know all his titles to the attention which your situation permits you to afford.

You must not think I forget you because I do not write (for this is only my third letter). I am overwhelmed in professional business, and have scarcely a moment for any thing else.

You will have learned the terrible depredations which the French have committed upon our trade in the West Indies, on the declared principle of intercepting our whole trade with the ports of her enemies. This conduct is making the impression which might be expected, though not with that electric rapidity which would have attended similar treatment from another power. The present session of Congress is likely to be very unproductive. That body is in the situation which we foresaw certain *anti*-executive maxims would bring them to.

Mr. Adams is President, Mr. Jefferson is Vice-President. Our Jacobins say they are well pleased, and that the *lion* and the *lamb* are to lie down together. Mr. Adam's PERSONAL friends talk a little in the same way. "Mr. Jefferson is not half so ill a man as we have been accustomed to think him. There is to be a united and a vigorous administration." Skeptics like me quietly look forward to the event, willing to hope, but not prepared to believe. If Mr. Adams has *vanity* 't is plain a plot has been laid to take hold of it. We trust his real good sense and integrity will be a sufficient shield.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Feb. 17, 1797.

I groan, my dear sir, at the disgraceful course of our affairs. I pity all those who are officially in the vortex. The behavior of Congress in the present crisis is a new political phenomenon. They must be severely arraigned before the bar of the public. How unfortunate that our friends suffer

themselves, by their passiveness, to be confounded in the guilt.*

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

February 26, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

The present inimitable course of our public affairs proves me to be a very bad politician, so that I am afraid to suggest any idea that occurs to me. Yet I will give over my timidity and communicate for your consideration a reverie which has struck me.

It is a fact that the resentment of the French Government is very much levelled at the actual President. A change of the person (however undesirable in other respects) may give a change to the passion, and may also furnish a bridge to retreat over. This is a great advantage to a new president, and the most ought to be made out of it. For it is much our interest to preserve peace, if we can with honor, and if we cannot, it will be very important to prove that no endeavor to do it has been omitted.

Were I Mr. Adams, then, I believe I should begin my presidency by naming an extraordinary commission to the French republic, and I think it would consist of three persons: Mr. Madison, Mr. Pinckney, and Mr. Cabot. I should pursue this course for several reasons, because I would have a man as influential with the French as Mr. Madison, yet I would not trust him alone, lest his Gallicism should work amiss, because I would not wound Mr. Pinckney, so recently sent in the same spirit; thirdly, I think Cabot would mix very useful ingredients in the cup.

The commission should be charged to make explanations, to remonstrate, to ask indemnification, and they should be empowered to make a new treaty of commerce, not inconsistent with our other treaties, and perhaps to abrogate or remodify the treaty of alliance.

That treaty can only be inconvenient to us in the future.

* Reprinted from the "Administration of Washington and Adams," i., p. 443.

The guaranty of our sovereignty and independence henceforth is nominal. The guaranty of the West India Islands of France, as we advance in strength, will be more and more real. In future, and in a truly defensive war, I think we shall be bound to comply efficaciously with our guaranty. Nor have I been able to see that it means less than obligation to take part in such a war with our whole force. I have no idea of treaties which are not executed.

Hence, I want to get rid of that treaty by mutual consent, or liquidate its meaning to a treaty of *definite* succor, in a clearly defensive war; so many men, so many ships, so much money, and to be furnished by one ally to the other. This, of course, must be so managed as to exclude unequivocally the present war in all its possible mutations. The idea of a definite duration would also be useful.

Such objects are important enough for *three*. In executive matters, I am as little fond as most people of plurality, but I think it pedantry to admit no exceptions to any general rule, and I believe, under the present circumstances of the case, a commission would be advisable. I give my dream of it as it occurred; you will do with it what you please.

The idea here given, to be useful ought to be executed at once. The Senate should not be permitted to disperse.

TO JAMES McHENRY.

March 22 (?), 1797.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Take my ideas and weigh them of a proper course of conduct for our Administration in the present juncture.

You have called Congress. 'T is well.

When the Senate meets (which I should be glad to see anticipated), send a Commission Extraordinary to France. Let it consist of *Jefferson* or *Madison*, Pinckney, and a third very safe man, say, *Cabot* [or Jay].

Proclaim a religious solemnity to take place at the meeting of Congress.

When Congress meet, get them to lay an embargo, with

liberty to the Executive to grant license to depart to vessels *armed* or sailing with *convoys.*

Increase the revenues vigorously and provide naval forces for *convoys.*

Purchase a number of vessels now built the most fit for sloops-of-war and cutters, and arm and commission them to serve as convoys. Grant qualified letters of marque to your merchantmen to arm, defend themselves, and capture those who attack, but not to cruise or attack.

Form a provisional army of 25,000 men, to be engaged eventually and have certain emoluments. Increase your cavalry and artillery in immediate service.

Or do as much of all this as you can. Make a last effort for peace, but be prepared for the worst.

The Emperor Paul is at best equivocal. A successor is apt to differ from a predecessor. He seems to be a *reformer,* too. Who can say into what scale his weight may be finally thrown?

If things shall so turn that Austria is driven to make peace and England left to contend alone, who can guarantee us that France may not sport in this country a *proselyting* army?

Even to get rid of the troops if it fails may be no bad thing to the government of that country. There is a *possible* course of things which may subject us even to an in ternal invasion by France. Our calculations to be solid should contemplate this possibility.

I know in your Administration there is a doubt about a *Commission* or Envoy Extraordinary. I am very sorry for it, because I am sure it is an expedient measure. But perhaps France has said she will receive no minister till her grievances shall be redressed.

'T is hardly possible this can refer to any but a *minister who is to reside.* A *special extraordinary* mission cannot be intended to be excluded, because it is at least necessary to know what measure of redress will satisfy if any is due. But grant she will refuse to hear.

Still, the great advantage results of showing in the most glaring light to our people, her unreasonableness, of disarming a party of the plea that all has not been done which might be done, and of refuting completely the charge that the *actual* administration desires war with France.

But the enemies of the government desire the measure. 'T is the strongest reason for adopting it. This will meet them on their own ground and shut their mouths.

But to answer the end, a man who will have their confidence must be sent—Jefferson or Madison. To do this and to be safe, others must be united—Jay, Pinckney, and Cabot. Hence the idea of a commission.

I am really, my friend, anxious that this should be your plan. Depend on it, it will unite the double advantage of silencing enemies and satisfying friends.

I write you this letter on your fidelity. *No mortal* must see it or know its contents.*

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

March 22, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

It is now ascertained that Mr. Pinckney has been refused, and with circumstances of indignity. What is to be done? The share I have had in the public administration, added to my interest as a citizen, make me extremely anxious that at this delicate crisis a course of conduct exactly proper may be adopted. I offer to your consideration, without what appears to me ceremony, such a course.

First.—I would appoint a day of humiliation and prayer. In such a crisis this appears to me proper in itself, and it will be politically useful to impress our nation that there is a serious state of things—to strengthen religious ideas in a contest, which in its progress may require that our people may consider themselves as the defenders of their country

* Now first printed entire from the Hamilton papers in the State Department. A portion of this letter is given in the "History of the Republic," vii., 18.

against atheism, conquest, and anarchy. It is far from evident to me that the progress of the war may not call on us to defend our firesides and our altars. And any plan which does not look forward to this as possible, will, in my opinion, be a superficial one.

Second.—I would call Congress together at as *short a day* as a majority of both houses can assemble.

Third.—When assembled, I would appoint a commission extraordinary, to consist of Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison, together with Mr. Cabot and Mr. Pinckney. To be useful it is important that a man agreeable to the French should go. But neither *Madison* nor Jefferson ought to go alone. The three will give security. It will flatter the French pride. It will engage American confidence, and recommend the people to what shall be eventually necessary. The commission should be instructed to explain; to ask a rescinding of the order under which we suffer, and reparation for the past —to remodify our treaties under proper guards. On the last idea I will trouble you hereafter.

Fourth.—The Congress should be urged to take defensive measures, these to be an *embargo*, unless with convoy by special license.

1. Additional revenue for additional expenses.

2. The creation of a naval force—including the prompt purchase and equipment of sloops-of-war—this force to serve as convoys to our trade.

3. Commissions to be granted to our merchant vessels, authorizing them to arm to defend themselves; to capture when attacked, but not to cruise. The same instructions to our convoys.

4. The organization of a provisional army of twenty-five thousand men, to be ready to serve if a war breaks out—in the meantime to receive certain compensations, but not full pay. The actual increase of our establishment in artillery and cavalry.

The following considerations appear to me weighty. The Empress of Russia is dead. Successors are too apt to con-

tradict predecessors. The new emperor may join Russia. The emperor of Germany by this means or by the fortune of war may be compelled to make peace. England may be left alone. America may be a good outlet for troublesome armies which the government is at a loss to manage. The governing passion of the ruler of France has been revenge. Their interest is not to be calculated upon. To punish us, to force us into a greater dependence, may be the plan of France.

At any rate we shall best guarantee ourselves against calamity by preparing for the work. In this time of general convulsion, in a state of things which threatens all civilization, 't is a great folly to wrap ourselves up in a cloak of security.

The Executive before Congress meet ought to have a *well-digested* plan and to *co-operate* in getting it adopted.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, March 29, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

The post of yesterday brought me your letter of the day before.

I regret that the idea of a commission extraordinary appears of doubtful propriety. For after very mature reflection I am entirely convinced of its expediency. I do not understand the passage you cite as excluding the reception of a *special extraordinary minister*, but of an extraordinary resident minister. It seems impossible that the Directory can mean to say that they will shut the door to all explanation, even as to the *nature* and *measure* of the redress of grievances which they require. They speak too hastily not to authorize a large interpretation of what they say.

But if I were certain they would not hear the commission, it would not prevent my having recourse to it. It would be my policy, if such a temper exists in them, to accumulate the proofs of it with a view to union at home.

This union (I do not expect to proselyte all the leaders of

faction) appears to me a predominant consideration; and, with regard to France, more than ordinary pains are requisite to attain it.

That the enemies of the government desire the measure, is a cogent reason with me for adopting it; because I would meet them on their own ground and disarm them of the argument that all has not been done which might have been done towards preserviug peace.

The *estimation* of the merit of all our past measures depends on the final preservation of peace. This, besides the interest of the country in peace, is a very powerful reason for attempting every thing. The best friends of the government will expect it, and if this expedient be not adopted, it seems to me rupture will inevitably follow.

There is an opinion industriously inculcated (which nobody better than myself knows to be false), that the *actual* administration are endeavoring to provoke a war. It is all important by the last possible sacrifice to confound this charge. I cannot but add that I have not only a strong wish, but an *extreme anxiety*, that the measure in question may be adopted.

To attain the end of it, however, it is very material to engage in the errand a man who will have the full confidence of the adverse party, and who will be agreeable to France.

This cannot be done without employing others with him. Hence the idea of a commission, which to me appears capable of attaining every advantage and obviating every danger.

I am also desirous of impressing the public mind strongly by a religious solemnity, to take place about the meeting of Congress. I also think the step intrinsically proper.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

March 30, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Every one who can properly appreciate the situation of our affairs at this moment, in all the extent of possible circumstances, must be extremely anxious for such a course of

conduct in our government, which will unite the utmost prudence with energy. It has been a considerable time my wish, that a commission extraordinary * should be constituted to go to France, to *explain, demand, negotiate*, etc. I was particularly desirous that the first measure of the present president's administration should have been that. But it has not happened. I now continue to wish earnestly that the same measure may go into effect, and that the meeting of the Senate may be accelerated for that purpose. Without opening a new channel of negotiation, it seems to me the door to accommodation is shut, and rupture will follow, if not prevented by a general peace. Who, indeed, can be certain that a general pacification of Europe may not leave us alone to receive the law from France? Will it be wise to omit any thing to parry, if possible, these great risks?

Perhaps the Directory have declared they will not receive a minister till their grievances shall have been redressed.

This can hardly mean more than that they will not receive a resident minister. It cannot mean that they will not hear an extraordinary messenger, who may even be sent to know what will satisfy.

Suppose they do. It will still be well to convince the people that the government has done all in its power, and that the Directory are unreasonable.

But the enemies of the government call for the measure. To me this is a very strong reason for pursuing it. It will meet them on their own ground, and disarm them of the plea that some thing has been omitted.

I ought, my good friend, to apprise you, for you may learn it from no other, that a suspicion begins to *dawn* among the friends of the government, that the *actual* administration is not much averse to war with France. How very important to obviate this!

The accounts just received offer a great danger, that the Emperor may be compelled to make peace. *Paul* of Russia is evidently lukewarm in the cause of the allies. From luke-

* Madison, Pinckney, and Cabot.

warmness to enmity, when fortune takes the other side, is but a step.

If England is left to bear the burthen alone, who can say that France may not venture to sport an army to this country? It may get rid of troublesome spirits.

As in the case of England, so now, my opinion is, to exhaust the expedients of negotiation; and, at the same time, to prepare *vigorously* for the worst. This is sound policy. Any omission or deficiency either way, will be a great error.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

April 1, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 30th, with the statement enclosed. I do not believe that its publication would have any influence upon the question of a rupture with France, but yet, as it seems that those who surround the President are not agreed in the matter—as an opinion is industriously circulated that too much fuel has been added by the publications of the government—as it is important to disarm a certain party of the weapons of calumny,—as it is in general best to avoid unofficial publications of official matter—as it may be even useful, for the sake of *impression*, to reserve the disclosure till the meeting of Congress, when the accumulation of insult may be the instrument of giving a strong impulse,—I rather advise the withholding of the statement. When Congress meet, it will be very useful to have a statement ready, as the abstract of the communication, to present to the people a summary view.

Such, my dear sir, is the infatuation of a great part of our community, that it will be policy in our government to do a great deal too much to make the idea palpable that rupture was inevitable. Adieu.

Yours truly, etc.

If the statement is published, I would close with the words "January last" in the last paragraph. The residue

will make a good separate newspaper paragraph. Pray, who is the emigrant alluded to?

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

April 5, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of March 31st. I hope nothing in my last was misunderstood. Could it be necessary, I would assure you that no one has a stronger conviction than myself of the purity of the motives which direct your public conduct, or of the good sense and judgment by which it is guided. If I have a fear (you will excuse my frankness), it is lest the *strength* of your feelings, the companions of energy of character, should prevent that pliancy to circumstances which is sometimes indispensable. I beg you only to watch yourself on this score, and the public will always find in you an able as well as a faithful servant.

The situation of our country, my dear sir, is singularly critical. The map of Europe is every way discouraging. There is too much reason to apprehend that the Emperor of Germany, in danger from Russia and Prussia, perhaps from the Porte, as well as from France, may be compelled to yield to the views of the latter. England, standing alone, may be driven to a similar issue. It is certain that great consternation in court and country attended the intelligence of Bonaparte's last victories. Either to be in rupture with France, united with England alone, or singly, as is possible, would be a most unwelcome situation. Divided as we are, who can say what would be hazarded by it?

In such a situation, it appeared to me we should rather err on the side of condescension than on the opposite side. We ought to do every thing to avoid rupture, without unworthy sacrifices, and to keep in view, as a primary object, union at home.

No measure can tend more to this than an extraordinary mission. And it is certain to fulfil the ends proposed. It ought to embrace a character in whom France and the oppo-

sition have full credit. What risk can attend *Madison*, if combined, as I propose, with Pinckney and Cabot, or such a man (two deciding)? Depend on it, *Pinckney* is a man of honor, and loves his country. Cabot we both know. Besides, there ought to be certain leading instructions from which they may not deviate.

I agree with you that we have nothing to retract; that we ought to risk every thing before we submit to any dishonorable terms. But we may remould our treaties. We may agree to put France on the same footing as Great Britain by our treaty with her. We may also liquidate, with a view to *future wars*, the import of the mutual guaranty in the treaty of alliance, substituting specific succors, and defining the *casus fœderis*. But this last may or may not be done, though with me it is a favorite object.

Ingersol will not fulfil the object, but I would rather have him than do nothing.

I am clearly of opinion with you that the President shall come forward to Congress in a manly tone, and that Congress shall adopt vigorous defensive measures. Those you propose are proper, and some others on which I may write hereafter.

If Madison is well coupled, I do not think his intrigues can operate as you imagine. Should he advocate dishonorable concessions to France, the public opinion will not support. His colleague, by address, and showing a disposition to do enough, may easily defeat his policy, and maintain the public confidence. Besides that, it is possible too much may be taken for granted with regard to Mr. Madison.

TO WILLIAM SMITH.

NEW YORK, April 5, 1797.

I have received, my dear sir, your letter of the 2d of April, (1797,) with your little work accompanying it, which I shall read with the interest I take in the author, the first leisure hour. I have cast my eye over it, and like very much the plan.

Our affairs are indeed very critical. But I am sorry to find that I do not agree with several of my friends. I am clearly of opinion for an extraordinary mission, and as clearly that it should embrace Madison. I do not think we ought to construe the declaration of the Directory against receiving a Minister Plenipotentiary, as an *extraordinary* mission *pro hac vice*. And if it does, it would be no reason with me against it. I would accumulate the proofs of French violence, and demonstrate to all our citizens that nothing possible has been omitted. That a certain party desires it is with me a strong reason for it—since I would disarm them of all plea that we have not made every possible effort for peace. The idea is a plausible one, that as we sent an Envoy Extraordinary to Britain, so we ought to send one to France. And plausible ideas are always enough for the multitude.

These and other reasons (and principally to avoid rupture with a political monster, which seems destined soon to have no competitor but England) make me even anxious for an extraordinary mission.

And to produce the desired effect, it seems to me essential that it shall embrace a *distinguished* character agreeable to France, and having the confidence of the adverse party. Hence I think of Madison, but I think of him only as *one*, because I would not trust him alone. I would unite with him Pinckney, and some strong man from the North, Jay, Cabot, and two of the three should rule. We should then be safe.

I need not tell you that I am disposed to make no sacrifices to France. I had rather perish myself and family than see the country disgraced. But I would try hard to avoid rupture, and if that cannot be, to unite the opinions of all good citizens of whatever political denomination. This is with me a mighty object.

I will give you hereafter my ideas of what ought to be done when Congress meet. My plan ever is to combine energy with moderation.

TO RUFUS KING.

April 8, 1797.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your letter of the 6th of February. The intelligence that the Directory have ordered away our minister is every way unpleasant. It portends, too, a final rupture as the only alternative to an ignominious submission. Much public feeling has been excited; but the government, I trust and believe, will continue prudent, and do every thing that honor permits towards accommodation. It is, however, to be feared that France, successful, will be too violent and imperious to meet us on any admissible ground.

Congress are called together. I can give you no conjecture as to what will be done. Opinions are afloat. My idea is, another attempt to pacify by negotiation, vigorous preparation for war, and defensive measures with regard to our trade. But there never was a period of our affairs in which I could less foresee the state of things.

I believe there is no danger of want of firmness in the Executive. If he is not ill-advised, he will not want prudence. I mean, that he is himself disposed to a *prudently firm* course.

You know the mass of our Senate. That of our House of Representatives is not ascertained. A small majority on the right side is counted upon. In Virginia it is understood that Morgan comes in place of Rutherford, and Evans in place of Page. The whole result of the Virginia election is not known.

The conduct of France has been a very powerful medicine for the political disease of our country. I think the community improves in soundness.

TO WILLIAM SMITH.

April 10, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

Since my last to you I have perused with great satisfaction your little work on our governments. I like the execution no less than the plan. If my health and leisure should

permit, I would make some notes; but you can not depend on it, as I am not only extremely occupied, but in feeble health.

I send you my ideas of the course of conduct proper in our present situation. It is unpleasant to me to know that I have for some time differed materially from many of my friends on public subjects, and I particularly regret that, at the present critical juncture, there is in my apprehension much danger that *sensibility* will be an overmatch for policy. We seem now to feel and reason as the *Jacobins* did when Great Britain insulted and injured us, though certainly we have at least as much need of a temperate conduct now as we had then. I only say, God grant that the public interest may not be sacrificed at the shrine of irritation and mistaken pride. Farewell.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, April 13, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

The post of to-day brought me a letter from you. I am just informed that an order is come to the custom-house not to clear out any vessels if armed, unless destined for the East Indies. Under the present circumstances, I very much doubt the expediency of this measure. The excesses of France justify passiveness in the government; and its inability to protect the merchants requires that it should leave them to protect themselves. Nor do I fear that it would tend to rupture with France, if such be not her determination otherwise. The legality of this prohibition cannot be defended; it must stand on its necessity. It would, I think, have been enough to require security that the vessel is not to be employed to cruise against any of the belligerent powers. Perhaps even now, where vessels have been armed previous to the receipt of the prohibition, it is safe and advisable to except them on the condition of such security. Think of this promptly. The general measure may be further considered at leisure. Nor am I prepared to say that, having *been taken*, it ought to be revoked.

I will send you shortly some remarks in reply to questions you propose.

TO ——— HAMILTON.

ALBANY, State of New York, May 2, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Some days since I received with great pleasure your letter of the 10th of March. The mark it affords of your kind attention, and the particular account it gives me of so many relations in Scotland are extremely gratifying to me. You, no doubt, have understood that my father's affairs at a very early day went to wreck, so as to have rendered his situation during the greatest part of his life far from eligible. This state of things occasioned a separation between him and me, when I was very young, and threw me upon the bounty of my mother's relatives, some of whom were then wealthy, though by vicissitudes to which human affairs are so liable, they have been since much reduced and broken up. Myself, at about sixteen, came to this country. Having always had a strong propensity to literary pursuits, by a course of steady and laborious exertion, I was able, by the age of nineteen, to qualify myself for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the College of New York, and to lay the foundation by preparatory study for the future profession of the law.

The American Revolution supervened. My principles led me to take part in it; at nineteen, I entered into the American army as captain of artillery. Shortly after I became, by his invitation, aide-de-camp to General Washington, in which station I served till the commencement of that campaign which ended with the siege of York in Virginia, and the capture of Cornwallis' army. The campaign I made at the head of a corps of light infantry, with which I was present at the siege of York, and engaged in some interesting operations.

At the period of the peace with Great Britain I found myself a member of Congress, by appointment of the legislature of this State.

After the peace, I settled in the city of New York, in the practice of the law, and was in a very lucrative course of practice, when the derangement of our public affairs, by the feebleness of the general confederation, drew me again reluctantly into public life. I became a member of the Convention which framed the present Constitution of the United States; and having taken part in this measure, I conceived myself to be under an obligation to lend my aid towards putting the machine in some regular motion. Hence, I did not hesitate to accept the offer of President Washington to undertake the office of Secretary of the Treasury.

In that office I met with many intrinsic difficulties, and many artificial ones, proceeding from passions, not very worthy, common to human nature, and which act with peculiar force in republics. The object, however, was effected of establishing public credit and introducing order in the finances.

Public office in this country has few attractions. The pecuniary emolument is so inconsiderable as to amount to a sacrifice to any man who can employ his time with advantage in any liberal profession. The opportunity of doing good, from the jealousy of power and the spirit of faction, is too small in any station to warrant a long continuance of private sacrifices. The enterprises of party had so far succeeded as materially to weaken the necessary influence and energy of the executive authority, and so far diminish the power of doing good in that department, as greatly to take away the motives which a virtuous man might have for making sacrifices. The prospect was even bad for gratifying in future the love of fame, if that passion was to be the spring of action.

The union of these motives, with the reflections of prudence in relation to a growing family, determined me as soon as my plan had attained a certain maturity, to withdraw from office. This I did by a resignation about two years since, when I resumed the profession of the law in the city of New York under every advantage I could desire.

It is a pleasant reflection to me, that since the commencement of my connection with General Washington to the present time, I have possessed a flattering share of his confidence and friendship.

Having given you a brief sketch of my political career, I proceed to some further family details.

In the year 1780, I married the second daughter of General Schuyler, a gentleman of one of the best families of this country, of large fortune, and no less personal and political consequence. It is impossible to be happier than I am in a wife; and I have five children, four sons and a daughter, the eldest a son somewhat past fifteen, who all promise as well as their years permit, and yield me much satisfaction. Though I have been too much in public life to be wealthy, my situation is extremely comfortable, and leaves me nothing to wish for but a continuance of health. With this blessing, the profits of my profession and other prospects authorize an expectation of such addition to my resources, as will render the eve of life easy and agreeable; so far as may depend on this consideration.

It is now several months since I have heard from my father, who continued at the island of St. Vincents. My anxiety at this silence would be greater than it is, were it not for the considerable interruption and precariousness of intercourse which is produced by the war.

I have strongly pressed the old gentleman to come and reside with me, which would afford him every enjoyment of which his advanced age is capable; but he has declined it on the ground that the advice of his physicians leads him to fear that the change of climate would be fatal to him. The next thing for me is, in proportion to my means, to endeavor to increase his comforts where he is.

It will give me the greatest pleasure to receive your son Robert at my house in New York, and still more to be of use to him; to which end, my recommendation and interest will not be wanting, and I hope not unavailing. It is my intention to embrace the opening which your letter affords

me to extend my intercourse with my relations in your country, which will be a new source of satisfaction to me.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

May 11, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

On my return here I found your letter of the 29th. The sitting of a court of chancery, and important business there, have unavoidably delayed a reply; now, it must be much more cursory than I could wish.

As to the mission, in some shape or other, the more I have reflected upon it, the more has it appeared to me indispensable. To accomplish, with certainty, a principal object of it—the silencing of Jacobin criticism, and promoting union among ourselves,—it is *very material* to engage in it a person who will have the Jacobin confidence; else, if France should still refuse to receive, or if receiving, the mission should prove unsuccessful, it will be said that this was because a suitable agent was not employed. Hence, my mind was led to Jefferson or Madison; but, as it would be unsafe to trust either alone, the idea of associates occurs as an essential part of the plan. This, likewise, is an expedient for saving Mr. Pinckney's feelings.

But will either of them go on this footing? If offered, and they refuse, they will put themselves in the wrong; for on so great an emergency, they cannot justifiably decline the service without a good reason; and it would not be a good reason for refusal, that there was to be a *commission*. The refusal, too, if it happened, would furnish a reply to Jacobin clamor. It was offered to your leaders, and they would not act.

I confide in Pinckney's integrity and federal attachments; why, then, name a third? Because, first, two may disagree, and there may be *inaction*. Second, though I have the confidence I mention, I think Pinckney has had too much French leaning to consider him, in conjunction with Jefferson or Madison, as perfectly safe. A third on whom perfect

reliance could be placed would secure Pinckney's co-operation. I do consider him, as in some sort, a *middle* character.

As to the two gentlemen named (Jefferson and Madison), it may be fairly observed to either of them that the combination of character is essential to combine the confidence of the country, and to render the result, whatever it may be, acceptable. It may also be observed that delicacy to Mr. Pinckney dictates this course—not to exclude him after what has happened. To Mr. Pinckney the state of parties here may also be pleaded.

The French Directory may also be made to understand indirectly that the association has proceeded from a desire in the Executive to unite confidence in the mission and secure its success at home.

I should not despair that in such a crisis men of opposite politics might agree. I verily believe that Jefferson, *Pinckney*, and King would agree. There might be a *joint* commission for action and a separate commission to Jefferson as envoy or ambassador extraordinary for *representation.*

I miscalculate if Jefferson will not be anxious for peace. I only fear that alone he would give too much for it.

If this plan is thought liable to too strong objections, the next best thing is to send the commission of *ambassador extraordinary* to *Pinckney*, and send him also some *clever fellow* as secretary of embassy.

But I repeat it with extreme solicitude, another mission is absolutely indispensable.

On the subject of permitting our vessels to arm, there is some difficulty. You are right in the idea that merchant vessels under the convoy of ships-of-war are exempt from search. But I know no book where it is to be found. Yet I have so constantly understood it to be the usage, that I venture to rely upon it. But I believe the privilege is confined to *public ships* of war, and could not, according to usage, be transferred to private armed vessels. The measure must, therefore, be justified by the extremity.

Moreover, I understand no other consequence as resulting

from the being armed than that it exposes the vessel to confiscation for resisting a search. It is no breach of neutrality to permit the being armed.

But I would avoid the *formality* of a commission, and would substitute some *permit*, perhaps to be signed by the head of a department. This should be united with great precautions to prevent *abuse* by cruising, by driving *contraband trade* by transfers to foreigners.

At all events our trade must have protection; for our whole mercantile capital will else be destroyed, our seamen lost, and our country involved in extreme distress.

As to a provisional army, I reason thus: no plan of a militia which is not the equivalent, in other words, which is not under a positive engagement to constitute a *permanent army in case of invasion*, will be worth any thing. For we want a *stable* force created beforehand to oppose to the first torrent, which, with mere militia, would involve incalculable dangers and calamities. Hence, as a substitute for a standing army, I offer a provisional one. It would be composed thus: the *officers* to be *appointed by the United States* and rank with those of the establishment, to receive some pay till called into actual service—say half, a third, or a fourth; those employed to *recruit* to be fully paid.

The men to be regularly *enlisted* upon condition not to be called into actual service, *except in case of invasion*, and then to serve during the war; to receive a *uniform* coat and a *dollar*, perhaps *two dollars* per month when not in the field; to be obliged to assemble for exercise so many days in the year, and then to have full pay and rations; when called into actual service to have the same compensations, etc., with the establishment; in short, to become part of it. To be armed by the United States; to be liable from the beginning to the articles of war.

I think such a corps, from the *certainty of advantage*, and the *uncertainty of service*, might be engaged sooner than a standing force, and, with precautions in the enlistment, would be a solid resource in case of need.

I am much attached to the idea of a large corps of *efficient* cavalry, and I cannot allow this character to militia. It is all-important to an undisciplined against a disciplined army. It is a species of force not easy to be brought by an invader—by which his supplies may be cut off and his activity extremely checked. Were I to command an undisciplined army, I should prefer half the force with a good corps of cavalry to twice the force without one.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

MY DEAR SIR: Saturday, May 13, 1797.

Mr. Goodhue takes on with him a Boston paper, the printer of which states that he has obtained, by a ship just arrived, a London paper of March 24th, mentioning in positive terms an account just received from the Emperor, that in consequence of a combination between Prussia and France, he is driven to the necessity of making an *immediate peace for the safety of the empire;* that in consequence of this, the king, who was at Windsor, had been sent for, etc.

The manner of announcing it is too positive to allow much doubt that the thing is substantially true.

This intelligence confirms the expediency of a further attempt to *negotiate*, but I hope it will not carry us too far. A firm and erect countenance must be maintained, and the vigor of preparation increased. Safety can only be found in uniting energy with moderation. Honor certainly is only to be found there, and either as a *man* or *citizen*, I, for one, had rather perish than submit to disgrace.

TO RUFUS KING.

June 6, 1797.

I thank you, my dear sir, for two letters lately received from you, the last by Mr. Church. I feel very guilty of negligence. But how can I help it?

The public prints will inform you of the course of public proceedings hitherto. You will perceive the general

plan is analogous to what was done in the case of Great Britain, though there are faults in the detail. Some people cannot learn that the only force which befits a government is in the *thought* and *action*, not in *words*, and many reverse the golden rule. I fear we shall do ourselves no honor in the result, and we shall remain at the mercy of events, without those efficient preparations which are demanded by so precarious situation; and which, not provoking war, would put us in condition to meet it. All the consolation I can give is, that the public temper of this country mends daily, and that there is no final danger of our submitting tamely to the yoke of France.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

MY DEAR SIR: June 6, 1797.

You some time ago put a question to me which, through hurry I never answered, viz.—whether there can be any distinction between the provision in the treaty with Great Britain respecting *British debts* and that respecting *spoliations as to the power* of the commissioners to rejudge the decisions of the *courts?* I answer that I can *discover* none.

I am of the opinion, however, that in the exercise of this power two principles ought to be strenuously insisted upon. One—that the commissioners ought not to intermeddle but when it is equivocally ascertained that justice cannot *now* be obtained through our courts. The *other*—that there ought to be no revision of the question of interest where abatements were made by juries undirected by any special statute. For it is certain that interest is capable of being affected by circumstances, and that the law leaves a considerable discretion on this point with juries. I take it for granted also, that where compromises were made between *creditor* and *debtor* without the intervention of courts, or the intervention of positive law, there will be no revision. This is a very delicate subject, one upon which great moderation and forbearance on the part of the British commissioners is very important to future harmony.

I like very well the course of Executive conduct in regard to the controversy with France, and I like the answer of the Senate in regard to the President's speech.

But I confess, I have not been well satisfied with the answer reported in the House. It contains too many hard expressions; and *hard words* are very rarely useful in public proceedings. Mr. Jay and other friends here have been struck in the same manner with myself. We shall not regret to see the answer softened down. *Real firmness* is good for every thing. *Strut* is good for nothing.

Last session I sent Sedgwick, with request to communicate to you, my project of a *building* tax. Enclosed is the rough sketch. I do not know whether there was any alteration in the copy sent to him.

But the more I reflect, the more I become convinced that some such plan ought to be adopted, and the idea of *valuation* dropped, and I have also become convinced that the idea of a tax on *land* ought to be deferred. The building tax can be accommodated to the *quota*-rule. For what were intended as *rates* may be considered as *ratios* of each individual's tax only, and then, as the *aggregate* of these *ratios* within a State is the *sum* of the ratios on a particular building, so will the sum to be raised in the State be to the sum to be paid by the owner of that building, and so the very bad business of *valuations* may be avoided in general. In regard to *stores, if they are comprehended,* rents or valuations may be adopted, and these rents may also be represented by *ratios* equivalent to the proportion of the specific *ratios* to the rents of houses to be estimated in the law.

If these ideas are not clear I will on your desire give a further explanation.

My plan of *ways* and *means* then for the present would be:

A tax on *buildings* equal to	$1,000,000
On *stamps*, including a small percentage on policies of insurance and a percentage on collateral successions	500,000

A duty on hats, say 5 per cent. for the commonest kind, 10 per cent. for the middling, and 20 for the best, to be decided by the materials.	
On saddle-horses —— dollars per horse .	150,000
On salt, so much as will make the *whole* duty 25 cents—suppose	350,000
	$2,000,000

I should like also a remodification of the duties on licenses to sell spirituous liquors by multiplying *discriminations*.

I would then open a loan for five millions of dollars, to be repaid absolutely within *five years*, upon which I would allow a high interest, say eight per cent., payable quarterly, and redeemable *at pleasure* by paying off, and I would accept subscriptions as low as one hundred dollars. In case of pressure, Treasury-bills bearing a like interest may be used.

If unfortunately *war breaks out*, then every practicable object of taxation should at once be seized hold of, so as to carry our revenue in the first instance to the extent of our ability. Nor is the field narrow.

I give you my ideas full *gallop* and without management of expression. I hope you always understand me a-right and receive my communications as they are intended, in the spirit of *friendly* frankness.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: June 8, 1797.

I have received your two letters of the 6th and 7th. The last announced to me no more than I feared. Nor do I believe any sufficient external impulse can be given to save us from *disgrace*. This, however, will be thought of.

I regret that you appear remote from the idea of a house tax simply, without combining the land. I do not differ from your general principle. The truth is a solid one that the sound state of political economy depends, in a great degree, on a

general repartition of taxes on taxable property, by some equal rule. But it is very important to relax in theory, so as to accomplish as much as may be practicable. I despair of a general land tax without actual war. I fear the idea of it; it keeps men from the augmentation of revenue by other means which they might be willing to adopt. The idea of a house tax alone is not so formidable. If placed upon a footing which would evince practicability and moderation in the sum, I think it might succeed. Now, one million of dollars, computing the number of houses at six hundred thousand, would be an average of about a dollar and a half. The tax would be very *low* on the worst houses, and could not be *high* on the best. This idea would smooth a great deal.

As to the circumstance of the habitations of the Southern negroes, I see no insuperable difficulty in applying ratios to them which would tend to individual equity. As between the States, the quota principle would make this point unimportant.

As to the inequality in certain States, I believe, on the plan suggested, there could be no general tax which in fact would operate more equally. The idea of equalization by embracing lands does not much engage my confidence. Besides that, this may be an after-object, and we are to gain points successively.

As to the productiveness of the stamp tax, with the items I suggest, it is difficult, in the first instance, to judge. But I am persuaded it would go far towards the point aimed at. There cannot be much fewer than three millions of hats consumed in a year in this country. At an average of eight cents per hat, this would be two hundred and forty thousand dollars, a large proportion of the five hundred thousand dollars. If law proceedings can be included, directly or indirectly, the produce will be very considerable. I think you mistake when you say these taxes in England are inconsiderable in proportion. According to my recollection, the reverse is the truth.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

DEAR SIR: August 27, 1797.

Some time since I received the enclosed, being directions concerning measures requisite to be pursued to obtain indemnification in case of capture by British cruisers. I laid it by in haste, and have since overlooked it. I do not recollect to have seen it in the newspapers, and yet it appeared to me necessary that it should be so. As it came to me from some one of our public characters in London, I presume you must have received the equivalent. I am curious to know if this has been the case, and if any thing has been done upon it.

After perusal, and making such use as you may think proper, you will oblige me by returning it.

TO WASHINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, August 28, 1797.

The receipt two days since of your letter of the 21st instant gave me sincere pleasure. The token of your regard which it announces is very precious to me, and will always be remembered as it ought to be.

Mrs. Hamilton has lately added another boy to our stock; she and the child are both well. She desires to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Washington and yourself.

We have nothing new here more than our papers contain, but are anxiously looking forward to a further development of the negotiations in Europe, with an ardent desire for general accommodation. It is at the same time agreeable to observe that the public mind is adopting more and more sentiments truly American, and free from foreign tincture.

I beg my best respects to Mrs. Washington.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: November 20, 1797.

Give me leave to remind you of your promise to send me the documents and information which authenticate the situation of Mr. Beaumarchais as to the unaccounted-for *million*.

Allow me also to mention to you another point. I hear there is a plan among the directors of the bank to transfer the management of their concerns from the house of *Cazenove* to that of Baring. When the arrangement was originally upon the tapis, I felt some preference to the house of *Baring* as of more known solidity. But after its having taken a different course I should regret a change unless upon grounds which I am persuaded do not exist—circumstances of insecurity in the conduct or affairs of the existing agents. I verily believe they unite prudence and solidity. The change might, without cause, injure their *credit* and do them *positive* harm. It was one thing to have entrusted them in the first instance. It is another to recall that trust, which neither justice nor the reputation of the bank will countenance, but for valid reasons of change of opinion. My friendship for Mr. Cazenove, the father, corresponds with my sense of propriety, to induce the wish that you may see fit to exert your influence in every proper way to prevent a change.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: 1797.

I thank you for your last letter. The opinion with regard to the conduct of the President is very important.

As to our finances, all will be well if our councils are wise and vigorous; if not, all will go to ruin. I fear there is not among the friends sufficient capaciousness of views for the greatness of the occasion.

I send the enclosed because it requires correction.*

TO RUFUS KING.

[Probably March, 1798.]

It is a great while, my dear friend, since I have written to you a line. You will not, I am sure, impute my silence to any cause impeaching my friendship, for that must be

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

always cordial and entire. The truth is that my professional avocations occupy me to the extent of the exertions my health permits, and I have been unwilling to sit down to write you without leisure to say some thing interesting. But I now depart from the rule, that my persevering silence may not make me sin beyond redemption. I have, however, only time to tell you that your friends are generally well, and as much attached to you as ever, and that I hear of no cabals against you.

Being just returned from Albany, I would say nothing about the political juncture as it is affected by the unpleasant advices from our commissioners in France. I will only say, that the public mind is much sounder than that of our representatives in the national council, and that there is no danger of our entirely disgracing ourselves—that is, by any unworthy compliances with the exorbitant pretensions of "The Great MONSTER." *

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, March 17, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I make no apology for offering you my opinion on the present state of our affairs.

I look upon the question before the public as nothing less than whether we shall maintain our indepencence; and I am prepared to do it in every event, and at every hazard. I am therefore of opinion that our Executive should come forth on this basis.

I wish to see a *temperate*, but *grave*, *solemn*, and *firm* communication from the President to the two houses on the result of the advices from our commissioners; this communication to review summarily the course of our affairs with France from the beginning to the present moment; to advert to her conduct towards the neutral powers generally, dwelling emphatically on the last decree respecting vessels carrying British manufactures, as an unequivocal act of

* *Soi-disant*, "The Great Nation."

hostility against all of them; to allude to the dangerous and vast projects of the French government; to consider her refusal to receive our ministers as a virtual denial of our independence, and as evidence that, if circumstances favor the plan, we shall be called to defend that independence, our political institutions, and our liberty, against her enterprises; to conclude, that leaving still the door to accommodation open, and not proceeding to final rupture, our duty, our honor, and safety, require that we shall take vigorous and comprehensive measures of defence, adequate to the immediate protection of our commerce, to the security of our ports, and to our eventual defence in case of invasion, and with a view to these great objects, calling forth and organizing all the resources of the country. I would, at the same time, have the President to recommend a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. The occasion renders it proper, and religious ideas will be useful. I have this last measure at heart.

The measures to be advocated by our friends in Congress to be these:

I.—Permission to our merchant vessels to arm and to capture those which may attack them.

II.—The completion of our frigates, and the provision of a considerable number of sloops-of-war not exceeding twenty guns. Authority to capture all attacking, and privateers found within twenty leagues of our coast.

III.—Power to the President, in general terms, to provide and equip ten ships of the line in case of open rupture with any foreign power.

IV.—The increase of our military establishment to twenty thousand, and a provisional army of thirty thousand, besides the militia.

V.—The efficacious fortification of our principal ports, say Portsmouth, Boston, Newport, New London, New York, Philadelphia, Norfolk, Baltimore, Wilmington, N. C., Charleston, Savannah. It is waste of money to be more diffusive.

VI.—The extension of our revenue to all the principal objects of taxation, and a loan commensurate with the contemplated expenditures.

VII.—The *suspension* of our treaties with France till a basis of connection shall be re-established by treaty.

In my opinion, bold language and bold measures are indispensable. The attitude of *calm defiance* suits us. It is vain to talk of peace with a power with which we are actually in hostility. The election is between a tame surrender of our rights or a state of mitigated hostility. Neither do I think that this state will lead to general rupture if France is unsuccessful; and if successful, there is no doubt in my mind that she will endeavor to impose her yoke upon us.

P. S.—If Robert Troup resigns his office of district judge, the President cannot make a better choice than of Samuel Jones, Esq., the present Comptroller of the State. I understand he will accept.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

March, 1798.

The President ought to make a solemn and manly communication to Congress—the language grave and firm, but without invective, in which, after recapitulating the progress of our controversy with France, the measures taken towards accommodation, and stating their degrading result, he ought to advert to the extremely critical posture of Europe, the excessive pretensions of France externally, her treatment of the neutral powers generally, and dwelling emphatically on the late violent invasion of their commerce, as an act destructive of the independence of nations, to state that eventual dangers of the most serious kind hang over us, and that we ought to consider ourselves as bound to provide with the utmost energy for the immediate security of our invaded rights, and for the ultimate defence of our liberty and independence, and conclude with a recommendation in general terms to adopt efficient measures for increasing our revenue, for protecting our commerce, for guarding

our sea-ports, and ultimately for repelling invasion; intimating also, that the relations of treaty which have subsisted between us and France, and which have been so entirely disregarded by her, ought not to remain by our Constitution and laws binding upon us, but ought to be suspended in their operations, till an adjustment of differences shall re-establish a basis of connection and intercourse between two countries, taking especial care, however, that merely defensive views be indicated.*

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

[Post-marked March 23, 1798.]

MY DEAR SIR:

I understand that the Senate have called upon the President for papers. Nothing certainly can be more proper; and such is the universal opinion here; and it appears to me essential that as much as possible can be communicated. Confidence will otherwise be wanting, and criticism will ensue which it will be difficult to repel. The observation is that Congress are called upon to discharge the most important of all their functions, and that it is too much to expect that they will rely on the influence of the Executive from materials which may be put before them. The recent examples of the British king are cited. Pray, let all that is possible be done.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

10 o'clock, Tuesday, March 27, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have this moment received your two favors of the 25th. I am delighted with their contents, but it is impossible for me to reply particularly to them so as to reach you *to-morrow* as you desire. I will therefore confine myself to one point. I am against going immediately into alliance with Great Britain. It is my opinion that her interests will insure us her co-operation to the extent of her power, and

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vii., 114.

that a treaty will not secure her further. On the other hand, a treaty might entangle us. Public opinion is not prepared for it. It would not fail to be represented as to the *point to which our previous conduct was directed;* and, in case of offers from France satisfactory to us, the public faith might be embarrassed by the calls of the people for accommodation and peace.

The *desideratum* is that Britain could be engaged to lodge with her *minister here* powers commensurate with such arrangement as exigencies may require and the progress of opinion permit. I see no good objection on her part to this plan.

It would be good policy in her to send to this country a dozen frigates to pursue the directions of this government.

If *Spain* would cede Louisiana to the United States, I would accept it absolutely if obtainable absolutely, or with an engagement to *restore*, if it cannot be obtained absolutely. I shall write again to-morrow.

TO JOHN JAY.

NEW YORK, April 24, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your two favors of the 19th instant. I feel, as I ought, the mark of confidence they announce. But I am obliged by my situation to decline the appointment. This situation you are too well acquainted with to render it necessary for me to enter into explanation. There may arrive a crisis when I may conceive myself bound once more to sacrifice the interests of my family to public call. But I must defer the change as long as possible.

I do not at present think of a person to recommend adapted to the emergency. I shall reflect and consult, and write you by the next post. This, the first day, is not decisive of our election here, but there is as yet nothing to discourage.*

* Jay was at this time Governor of New York, and he had written Hamilton, asking his permission to appoint him U. S. Senator in place of Judge Hobart, who had resigned.

TO JAMES McHENRY.

MY DEAR SIR: May 17, 1798.

I have received your letter of the 12th instant. Not having seen the law which provides the *naval armament*, I cannot tell whether it gives any new power to the President; that is, any power whatever with regard to the employment of the ships. If not, and he is left at the foot of the Constitution, as I understand to be the case, I am not ready to say that he has any other power than merely to employ the ships as convoys, with authority to *repel* force by *force* (but not to capture), and to repress hostilities within our waters, including a marine league from our coasts.

Any thing beyond this must fall under the idea of *reprisals*, and requires the sanction of that department which is to declare or make war.

In so delicate a case, in one which involves so important a consequence as that of war, my opinion is that no doubtful authority ought to be exercised by the President; but, that as different opinions about his power have been expressed in the House of Representatives, and no special power has been given by the law, it will be expedient for him, and his duty, and the true policy of the conjuncture, to come forward by a message to the two houses of Congress, declaring that "*so far* and *no farther*" he feels himself *confident* of his authority to go in the employment of the naval force; that as, in his opinion, the depredations on our trade demand a more extensive protection, he has thought it his duty to bring the subject under the review of Congress by a communication of his opinion of his own powers, having no desire to exceed the constitutional limits.

This course will remove all clouds as to what the President will do; will gain him credit for frankness and an unwillingness to chicane the Constitution, and will return upon Congress the question in a shape which cannot be eluded.

I presume you will have heard before this reaches you that a French privateer has made captures at the mouth of our harbor. This is too much humiliation after all that has passed.

Our merchants are very indignant; our government very prostrate in the view of every man of energy.

TO RUFUS KING.

MY DEAR SIR: May, 1798.

It is a great while since I received a line from you, nor, indeed, have I deserved one; the vortex of business in which I have been having kept me from writing to you. At this moment, I presume, you will not be sorry to know my opinion as to the course of our public affairs.

In Congress a good spirit is gaining ground, and, though measures march slowly, there is reason to expect that almost every thing which the exigency requires will be done. The plan is present defence against depredations by sea, and preparations for eventual danger by land. In the community, indignation against the French Government, and a firm resolution to support our own, discover themselves daily by unequivocal symptoms. The appearances are thus far highly consoling.

But, in this posture of things, how unfortunate is it that the new instructions offered by Great Britain, which appear, according to the reports of the day, to be giving rise to many abusive captures of our vessels, are likely to produce a counter-current, and to distract the public dissatisfaction between two powers, who, it will be said, are equally disposed to plunder and oppress. In vain will it be urged that the British Government cannot be so absurd as at such a juncture to intend us injury. The effects will be alone considered, and they will make the worst possible impression. By what fatality has the British Cabinet been led to spring any new mine, by new regulations, at such a crisis of affairs? What can be gained to counteract the mischievous tendency of abuses? Why are weapons to be furnished to our Jacobins?

It seems the captured vessels are carried to the Mole, where there is a virtuous judge, of the name of *Cambault*, disposed to give sanction to plunder in every shape.

Events are not yet sufficiently unfolded to enable us to judge of the extent of the mischief, but nothing can be more unlucky than that the door has been opened. The recency of the thing may prevent your hearing any thing about it from the government by this opportunity.

P. S.—It is said privateers are fitting out at Antigua and St. Kitts.

TO WASHINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, May 19, 1798.

At the present dangerous crisis of public affairs, I make no apology for troubling you with a political letter. Your impressions of our situation, I am persuaded, are not different from mine. There is certainly great probability that we may have to enter into a very serious struggle with France; and it is more and more evident that the powerful faction which has for years opposed the government, is determined to go every length with France. I am sincere in declaring my full conviction, as the result of a long course of observation, that they are ready to *new-model* our Constitution under the *influence* or *coercion* of France, to form with her a perpetual alliance, *offensive* and *defensive*, and to give her a monopoly of our trade by *peculiar* and *exclusive* privileges. This would be in substance, whatever it might be in name, to make this country a province of France. Neither do I doubt that her standard, displayed in this country, would be directly or indirectly seconded by them, in pursuance of the project I have mentioned.

It is painful and alarming to remark, that the opposition faction assumes so much a geographical complexion. As yet, from the south of Maryland nothing has been heard but accounts of disapprobation of our government, and approbation of or apology for France. This is a most potentous symptom, and demands every human effort to change it.

In such a state of public affairs, it is impossible not to look up to you, and to wish that your influence could in

some proper mode be brought into direct action. Among the ideas which have passed through my mind for this purpose, I have asked myself whether it might not be expedient for you to make a circuit through Virginia and North Carolina, under some pretence of health, etc. This would call forth addresses, public dinners, etc., which would give you an opportunity of expressing sentiments in answers, toasts, etc., which would throw the weight of your character into the scale of the government, and revive an enthusiasm for your person, that may be turned into the right channel.

I am aware that the step is delicate, and ought to be well considered before it is taken. I have even not settled my own opinion as to its propriety, but I have concluded to bring the general idea under your view, confident that your judgment will make a right choice; and that you will take no step which is not well calculated. The conjuncture, however, is extraordinary, and now, or very soon, will demand extraordinary measures.

You ought also to be aware, my dear sir, that in the event of an open rupture with France, the public voice will again call you to command the armies of your country; and, though all who are attached to you will, from attachment, as well as from public considerations, deplore an occasion which should once more tear you from that repose to which you have so good a right, yet it is the opinion of all those with whom I converse, that you will be compelled to make the sacrifice. All your past labor may demand to give it efficacy this further, this very great sacrifice. Adieu, my dear sir.

TO WASHINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, June 2, 1798.

I have before me your favor of the 27th of May. The suggestion in my last was an indigested thought, begotten by my anxiety. I have no doubt that your view of it is accurate and well founded.

It is a great satisfaction to me to ascertain what I had anticipated in hope, that you are not determined in an

adequate emergency against affording once more your military services. There is no one but yourself that would unite the public confidence in such an emergency, independent of other considerations, and it is of the last importance that this confidence should be *full and complete.* As to the wish of the country, it is certain that it will be *ardent and universal.* You intimate a desire to be informed what would be my part in such an event as to entering into military service. I have no scruple about opening myself to you on this point. If I am invited to *a station in which the service I may render may be proportionate to the sacrifice I am to make,* I shall be willing to go into the army. If you command, the place in which I should hope to be most useful is that of Inspector-General, with a command in the line. This I would accept. The public must judge for itself as to whom it will employ, but every individual must judge for himself as to the terms on which he will serve, and consequently must estimate his own pretensions.

I have no knowledge of any arrangement contemplated, but I take it for granted the service of all the former officers worth having may be commanded, and that your choice would regulate the Executive. With decision and care in the selection an excellent army may be formed.

The view you give of the prospects in the South is very consoling. The public temper seems everywhere to be travelling to a right point. This promises security to the country in every event.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, June 5, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

The answer from the President to the Commander-in-Chief, etc., of New Jersey, contains in the close a very indifferent passage. The sentiment is intemperate and revolutionary. It is not for us, particularly for the government, to breathe an irregular or violent spirit. Hitherto I have much liked the President's answers, as, in the main,

within proper bounds, and calculated to animate and raise the public mind. But there are limits which must not be passed, and from my knowledge of the ardor of the President's mind, and this specimen of the effects of that ardor, I begin to be apprehensive that he may run into indiscretion. This will do harm to the government, to the cause, and to himself. Some hint must be given, for we must make no mistakes.

Enclosed is a sketch of some ideas which have run through my mind. They are perhaps none of them new, but they are offered as the evidence of my opinion on the point. As yet we are far short of the point of vigor.

Further measures advisable to be taken without delay.

First.—To authorize the President to proceed forthwith to raise the ten thousand men already ordered.

Secondly.—To establish an academy for naval and military instruction. This is a very important measure, and ought to be permanent.

Thirdly.—To provide for the immediate raising of a corps of non-commisioned officers, viz.: *sergeants and corporals*, sufficient, with the present establishment, for an army of fifty thousand men. The having these men prepared and *disciplined* will accelerate extremely the disciplining of an additional force.

Fourthly.—To provide, before Congress rise, that in case it shall appear that an invasion of this country by a large army is actually on foot, there shall be a draft from the militia, to be classed, of a number sufficient to complete the army of fifty thousand men. Provision for volunteers in lieu of drafts. A bounty to be given.

Fifthly.—To authorize the President to *provide* a further naval force of six ships of the line and twelve frigates, with twenty small vessels not exceeding sixteen guns. It is possible the ships of the line and frigates may be purchased of Great Britain, to be paid for in *stock*. We ought to be ready to cut up all the small privateers and gun-boats in the

West Indies, so as at the same time to distress the French islands as much as possible, and protect our own trade.

Sixthly.—Is not the independence of the French colonies, under the guaranty of the United States, to be aimed at? If it is, there cannot be too much promptness in opening negotiations for the purpose. Victor Hugues is probably an excellent subject. This idea, however, deserves mature consideration.

Seventhly.—It is essential the Executive should have half a million of secret-service money. If the measure cannot be carried without it, the expenditure may be with the approbation of three members of each house of Congress. But it were better without this incumbrance.

Eightly.—Revenue in addition to the two millions of land tax, say :

	Probable Produce.
A stamp duty on hats, as well manufactured at home as imported, distributed into three classes: ten, fifteen, and twenty-five cents . .	$500,000
Saddle-horses one dollar each, excluding those engaged in agriculture	100,000
Salt, add so as to raise the present duty to twenty-five cents per bushel.	
Male servants of these capacities, by whatever name: *maître d'hotel, house steward, valet de chamber, butler, under butler, confectioner, cook, house porter, waiter, footman, coachman, groom, postilion, stable-boy.**	
For one such servant	$1
For two servants and not more . . . each,	2
For three servans and not more . . - "	3
Above three . . . . . "	4 500,000
(One dollar additional by bachelors.)	
New modification, with greater diversity of licenses for sale of wines, etc. . . .	100,000
One per cent. on all successions by descent or devise	100,000

* In lieu of tax on slaves, which is liable to much objection.

Ninthly.—A loan of ten millions of dollars. The interest to be such as will insure the loan at par. It is better to give high interest redeemable at pleasure, than low interest with accumulation of capital, as in England.

TO RUFUS KING.

June 6, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Official information and the public papers will give you all the information I could give of the measures going on in this country. You will have observed with pleasure a spirit of patriotism kindling everywhere. And you will not be sorry to know that it is my opinion, that there will shortly be national unanimity, as far as that idea can ever exist. Many of the leaders of faction will persist, and take ultimately a station in the public estimation like that of the tories of our revolution.

Our chief embarrassment now is, the want of energy among some of our friends, and our councils containing too strong an infusion of those characters who cannot reform, and who, though a minority, are numerous enough and artful enough to perplex and relax. We do far less than we ought towards organizing and maturing for the worst the resources of the country. But I count that there is a progress of opinion which will probably shortly overcome this obstacle.

How vexatious that at such a juncture there should be officers of Great Britain, who, actuated by a spirit of plunder, are doing the most violent things, calculated to check the proper amount of popular feeling, and to furnish weapons to the enemies of government. Cambault at the Mole is acting a part quite as bad as the Directory and their instruments. I have seen several of his condemnations. They are wanton beyond measure. It is not enough that his acts are disavowed, and a late and defective redress given through the channels of the regular courts. Justice, and the policy of the crisis, demand that he be decisively

punished and disgraced. I think it probable you will be instructed to require this. It would be happy if the government where you are would anticipate.

It is unlucky, too, that Cochran, of the *Thetis*, appears to be doing some ill things. The Southern papers announce a number of captures lately made by him, and in some instances, if they say true, on very frivolous pretexts. The character of that gentleman would lead me to hope that there is in this some misrepresentation, but the present appearances against him are strong.

There seems a fatality in all this. It cannot be doubted that the British cabinet must at this time desire to conciliate this country. It is to be hoped they will not want vigor to do it with effect, by punishing those who contravene the object.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

June 7, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

As McHenry will probably have left Philadelphia before this reaches that place, I take the liberty to address the subject of it to you.

I have received a letter from Capt. Van Rensselaer, in which he informs me that he is a candidate for a commission on board our navy, and requests my recommendation of it. As a connection of our family, I cannot refuse it, as far as truth and propriety will warrant.

When he first began his career, the young man did things which were not pretty, but he has since that retrieved his character by a conduct which has rapidly raised him to the command of a ship, which he has had of several. I have particularly inquired concerning him, and my inquiries have been satisfactorily answered, so that I really conclude he is a deserving man. But of this you can be better ascertained from persons in Philadelphia, in whose employ I believe he has sailed.

My only intention is to request *attention* to his *pretensions*,

as far as they appear to be good, and in the proportion which they bear to those of other candidates. I owe this to him as a family connection, and I may add that he is of a *brave* blood.

What do the British mean? What are these stories of the *Thetis*, etc.? In my opinion, our country is now to act in every direction with spirit. Will it not be well to order one of our frigates to Charleston, to protect effectually our commerce in that quarter, and, if necessary, control the *Thetis?* This conduct will unite and animate.

P. S.—If an alien bill passes, I would like to know what policy, in execution, is likely to govern the *Executive*. My opinion is, that while the mass ought to be obliged to leave the country, the provisions in our treaties in favor of merchants ought to be observed, and there ought to be *guarded* exceptions of characters whose situation would expose them too much if sent away, and whose demeanor amongst us has been unexceptionable. There are a few such. Let us not be cruel or violent.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

June 8, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Though I scarcely think it possible that the British Administration can have given the orders which accounts from various quarters attribute to them, yet the circumstance of these accounts coming from different quarters, and the conduct of such a man as Capt. Cochran, make me apprehensive. I take the liberty to express to you my opinion that it is of the true policy as well as of the dignity of our government, to act with spirit and energy as well toward Great Britain as France. I would *mete* the same measure to both of them, though it should even furnish the extraordinary spectacle of a nation at war with two nations at war with each other. One of them will quickly court us, and by this course of conduct our citizens will be enthusiastically united to the government. It will evince that we are

neither *Greeks* nor *Trojans*. In very critical cases bold expedients are often necessary. Will not a pointed call on the British Minister here to declare whether he has any knowledge of the instructions alleged be proper? The making this call and the answer public may have a good effect.

No one who does not see all the cards can judge accurately. But I am sure the general course I indicate cannot but be well.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: June 29, 1798.

I have this moment seen a bill † brought into the Senate, entitled "A Bill to define more particularly the crime of Treason," etc. There are provisions in this bill, which, according to a cursory view, appear to me highly exceptionable, and such as, more than any thing else, may endanger civil war. I have not time to point out my objections by this post, but I will do it to-morrow. I hope sincerely the thing may not be hurried through. Let us not establish a tyranny. Energy is a very different thing from violence. If we make no false step, we shall be essentially united, but if we push things to an extreme, we shall then give to faction *body* and solidity.

TO WASHINGTON.

DEAR SIR: July 8, 1798.

I was much surprised on my arrival here to discover that your nomination had been without any previous consultation of you. Convinced of the goodness of the motives, it would be useless to scan the propriety of the step. It is taken, and the question is, what, under the circumstances, ought to be done? I use the liberty which my attachment to you and to the public authorizes, to offer my opinion that you should not decline the appointment. It is evident that the public satisfaction at it is lively and universal. It

* Now first printed from the Pickering papers in possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

† The first draft or project of what afterwards became the Alien and Sedition laws.

is not to be doubted that the circumstance will give an additional spring to the public mind—will tend much to unite, and will facilitate the measures which the conjuncture requires. On the other hand, your declining would certainly produce the opposite effects, would throw a great damp upon the ardor of the country, inspiring the idea that the crisis was not really serious or alarming. At least, then, let me entreat you, and in this all your friends, indeed, all good citizens will unite, that if you do not give an unqualified acceptance, that you accept provisionally, making your entering upon the duties to depend on future events, so that the community may look up to you as their certain commander. But I prefer a simple acceptance.

It may be well, however, to apprise you that the arrangement of the army may demand your particular attention. The President has no *relative* ideas, and his prepossessions on military subjects in reference to such a point are of the wrong sort. It is easy for us to have a good army, but the selection requires care. It is necessary to inspire confidence in the efficient part of those who may incline to military service. Much adherence to routine would do great harm. Men of capacity and exertion in the higher stations are indispensable. It deserves consideration whether your presence at the seat of government is not necessary. If you accept it will be conceived that the arrangement is yours, and you will be responsible for it in reputation. This, and the influence of a right arrangement upon future success, seem to require that you should, in one mode or another, see efficaciously that the arrangement is such as you would approve.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, July 17, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I thank you for your friendly letter by the post. I had not contemplated the possibility that *Knox* might come into service, and was content to be second to him, if thought in-

dispensable. *Pinckney*, if placed over me, puts me a grade lower. I don't believe it to be necessary. I am far from certain that he will not be content to serve under me, but I am willing that the affair should be so managed as that the relative ranks may remain open to future settlement, to ascertain the effect of the arrangement which has been contemplated.

I am not, however, ready to say that I shall be satisfied with the appointment of Inspector-General, with the rank and command of Major-General, on the principle that every officer of higher rank in the late army, who may be appointed, is to be above me.

I am frank to own that this will not accord with my opinion of my own pretensions, and I have every reason to believe that it will fall far short of public opinion.

Few have made so many sacrifices as myself. To few would a change of situation for a military appointment be so injurious as to myself. If, with this sacrifice, I am to be degraded below my just claim in public opinion, ought I to acquiesce?

TO GENERAL DUPORTAIL.*

NEW YORK, July 23, 1798.

MY DEAR GENERAL:

Though it is a great while since I have heard from you, I have not ceased to inquire after you, and I shall never cease to interest myself in your welfare.

You have seen the progress of things between this country and France, and you must have made reflections on your own situation. I am aware that the idea of your entering in any way into the military service of this country, on such an occasion, is one of great delicacy, and opposed by many motives. But knowing your opinion as to

* The Chevalier Louis Duportail, a distinguished officer of engineers among our French allies. He was denounced after the fall of Lafayette, and fled to this country. He died on the voyage home, after the 18th Brumaire made it possible for him to return.

the revolution and revolutionary leaders of your country, I have thought it not wholly impossible that such an idea would not be entirely disagreeable to you, and I am desirous of ascertaining, in the most scrupulous confidence, the state of your mind on this point. The subject may divide itself into employment *in the field* and employment *out of the field.*

When I take the liberty to sound you on this head, I ought to assure you, as is truly the case, that the step is wholly from the suggestion of my own mind, and that I am altogether at a loss to conjecture whether those who must decide the matter would be at all disposed to avail themselves of your services.

I pray you nevertheless to open to me freely your heart on this point, in the fullest reliance upon my prudence, honor, and delicacy. If it were not to intrude too much upon you, I would request you to favor me with a digested plan of an establishment for a military school. This is an object I have extremely at heart.

TO WASHINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR: PHILADELPHIA, July 29, 1798.

Your letter of the 14th instant did not reach me till after the appointments mentioned in it were made.

I see clearly in what has been done a new mark of your confidence, which I value as I ought to do.

With regard to the delicate subject of the relative rank of the major-generals, it is very natural for me to be a partial judge, and it is not very easy for me to speak upon it. If I know myself, however, this, at least, I may say, that, were I convinced of injustice being done to others in my favor, I should not hesitate even to volunteer a correction of it, as far as my consent would avail. But in a case like this, am I not to take the opinion of others as my guide? If I am, the conclusion is that the gentlemen concerned ought to acquiesce. It is a fact of which there is a flood of

evidence that a great majority of leading Federal men were of opinion that in the event of your declining the command of the army, it ought to devolve upon me, and that in case of your acceptance, which everybody ardently desired, the place of second in command ought to be mine.

It is not for me to examine the justness of this opinion. The illusions of self-love might be expected too easily to give it credit with me. But finding it to exist, am I at liberty to seek to postpone myself to others, in whose hands, according to that opinion, the public interests would be less well confided? Such are the reflections which would have determined me to let the business take its course.

My own opinion, at the same time, is, that of the two gentlemen postponed to me, the cause of complaint, if any, applies emphatically to General Knox. His rank in the army was much higher than that either of Pinckney or myself. Pinckney's pretensions on the score of real service are not extensive; those of Knox are far greater. Pinckney has, no doubt, studied tactics with great care and assiduity, but it is not presumable that he is as well versed in the tactics of a general as *Knox*.

Pinckney's rank at the close of the war was only nominally greater than mine; it was, indeed, of more ancient date. But when, in the year 1777, the regiments of artillery were multiplied, I had good reason to expect that the command of one of them would have fallen to me, had I not changed my situation. And this, in all probability, would have led further. I am aware, at the same time, that there were accidental impediments to Pinckney's progress in preferment, but an accurate comparison would, I imagine, show that, on the score of rank merely, the claim of superiority on his part is not strongly marked. As to military *service*, I venture to believe that the general understanding of the late army would allow a considerable balance to me.

As to civil services since the war, I am extremely mistaken if, in the minds of Federal men, there is any comparison between us. The circumstances of the moment, it is

true, gave him a certain *éclat*, but judicious men reduce the merit to the two points of judicious *forbearance* and the *firmness* not to sacrifice his country by base compliances. In all this, it is very far from my inclination to detract from General Pinckney. I have a sincere regard for him, and hold him in high estimation. At the same time, endeavoring to view the matter with all the impartiality which my situation permits, I must conclude that General Pinckney, on a fair estimate of all circumstances, ought to be well satisfied with the arrangement.

After saying this much, I will add that regard to the public interest is ever predominant with me; that if the gentlemen concerned are dissatisfied, and the service likely to suffer by the preference given to me, I stand ready to submit our relative pretensions to an impartial decision, and to waive the preference. It shall *never* be said, with any color of truth, that my ambition or interest has stood in the way of the public good.

Thus, sir, have I opened my heart to you with as little reserve as to myself, willing, rather, that its weakness should appear than that I should be deficient in frankness. I will only add that I do not think it necessary to make public beforehand the ultimate intention I have now disclosed.

It is possible the difficulties anticipated may not arise. But, my dear sir, there is a matter of far greater moment than all this, which I must do violence to my friendship by stating to you, but of which it is essential you should be apprised. It is that my friend McHenry is wholly insufficient for his place, with the additional misfortune of not having himself the least suspicion of the fact. This generally will not surprise you, when you take into view the large scale upon which he is now to act. But you perhaps may not be aware of the whole extent of the insufficiency. It is so great as to leave no probability that the business of the War Department can make any tolerable progress in his hands. This has been long observed, and has been more than once mentioned to the President by members of Congress.

He is not insensible, I believe, that the execution of the department does not produce the expected results; but the case is of course delicate and embarrassing.

My real friendship for McHenry, concurring with my zeal for the service, predisposed me to aid him in all that he could properly throw upon me, and I thought that he would have been glad, in the organization of the army, and in the conduct of the recruiting service, to make me useful to him. With this view, I came to this city, and I previously opened the way as far as I could with the least decency. But the idea has thus far been very partially embraced, and to-morrow or next day I shall return to New York, without much fruit of my journey. I mention this purely to apprise you of the course of things, and the probable results.

It is to be regretted that the supposition of co-operation between the Secretary of War and the principal military officers will unavoidably throw upon the latter a part of the blame which the ill success of the operations of the War Department may be expected to produce. Thus you perceive, sir, your perplexities are begun.

P. S.—Since writing the above, I have concluded to write a letter, of which the enclosed is the copy.* This effort to save a man I value, and promote the service has, under the circumstances, cost some thing to my delicacy.

Mr. Harper, of the House of Representatives, is desirous of being in your family. He is a man of very *considerable talents* and has the temper of a soldier. The shade to his useful qualities is *vanity*, but I think the good much outweighs the ill. Pardon this liberty in a point so delicate.

NEW YORK, Aug. 1, 1798.

The above was written at Philadelphia, but a very pressing call to this place, added to occupation there, prevented my being able to copy and forward it till now.

* The writer of the enclosed letter is a man of respectability. I could recommend his primary object. [This is in the MS.]

Give me leave to suggest the expediency of your asking of McHenry a statement of all the military supplies, cannon, arms, etc., etc., which are already provided, and of the means and measures provided and in execution for augmenting the quantity. This will give you necessary information and prompt to exertion.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

MY DEAR SIR: August 6, 1798.

You are probably apprised that in announcing to the general officers their appointments they are told that the emoluments are to be suspended until called into actual service, and that, as a consequence of this plan, they are to remain inactive.

This project suits admirably my private arrangements, by leaving me to pursue in full extent my profession. But I believe it accords neither with the intention of the individuals who framed the laws nor with the good of the service. It is impossible for McHenry to get through all that is now upon his hands in a manner honorable to himself, satisfactory to the public, or proportioned to the energy of the conjuncture. You will see by the enclosed that I have sacrificed my delicacy to my friendship and public zeal. I have heard nothing in reply. I thought it expedient that you and Colonel Pickering should understand in confidence the situation of things. Without a change of plan they will not go well, and the government and all concerned will be discredited.

TO GENERAL DAYTON.*

MY DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Aug. 6, 1798.

I received at Philadelphia your letter of the 27th of July, the answer to which has been delayed by excessive occupation.

* Elias Dayton, of New Jersey, a distinguished revolutionary officer and father of Jonathan Dayton, at this time Speaker of the National House, and grandfather of William L. Dayton, senator from New Jersey, candidate on the Fremont ticket in 1856 for vice-president, and minister to France.

You know, I trust, sufficiently my sentiments of you not to need being told how much pleasure your appointment gave me, and how highly I value the confidence you express in me.

It will probably be unexpected to you to be told that I am not yet in the exercise of the functions of my military office, and that my participation in the preliminary arrangements is only occasional and very limited.

Such, however, is the course of the plan which has been adopted by the Executive.

But I have, notwithstanding, had conversation with the Secretary at War on the points you mention, and to the extent of my opportunity have endeavored to promote a right direction. You no doubt have before this received a letter from the Secretary on the subject of proper characters for officers. It seems to be determined in his mind to appoint Col. Aaron Ogden to the command of a regiment.

Everybody must consider him as a great acquisition in this station. The part of your letter which respects him, announcing the certainty of his acceptance, was particularly grateful to me.

Enclosed you will receive the instructions for the recruiting service, which were previously prepared by the Secretary at War. I made such remarks upon them as hastily occurred. Examine them carefully, and suggest to me whatever amendments or additions may present themselves to you. You will oblige me by free communications at all times.

TO BENJAMIN STODDERT.*

NEW YORK, Aug. 7, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

Capt. Robert Hamilton, a first cousin of mine, is desirous of employment in this country in the line of his profession. He is regularly bred to the sea, which he has followed since he was fourteen years old, and has had the best opportuni-

es.
ntionary
National
rsey, candid
, France.

* Benjamin Stoddert, of Maryland, at this time Secretary of the Navy.

ties of improvement—among others that of voyages to the East Indies. He has also commanded a ship and has acted as supercargo. I venture with confidence to recommend him as well qualified and every way worthy; adding to skill in his profession the sentiments of a gentleman, good morals, intelligence, and prudence. I interest myself very much in his success, and shall esteem it as a personal favor to myself whatever may be done for his interest.

TO JAMES McHENRY.

(*Private.*)

NEW YORK, Aug. 19, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

I write you herewith an official letter. Your private one of the 14th is before me. I regret that you have been unwell and rejoice that you are better.

The affair of General Knox perplexes me. I wish him to serve. I am pained to occasion to him pain, for I have truly a warm side for him, and a high value for his merits; but my judgment tells me, and all I consult confirm it, that I cannot reasonably postpone myself in a case in which a preference so important to the public in its *present* and *future* consequences has been given me. In denominating the preference important, I do not intend to judge whether it will be well or ill founded; in either case its tendency is so important, I am willing to confer, to adjust amicably, with the advice of mutual friends. But how can I abandon my pretension?

At foot, my dear sir, I transmit you the draft of such a reply as it seems to me proper for you to make to General Knox. It may also be well for you, in a private letter, to advise him to accept, with a reservation of his claim *ad referendum*, upon the ground of the rule he quotes, and with the understanding that it will not be understood to engage him to continue, if the matter be not finally settled according to his claim.

(*Draft above referred to.*)

SIR:

An answer to your letter of the 5th instant has been delayed by some degree of ill health on my part.

The general disposition it marks accords well with the patriotic sentiments you have so constantly manifested. It is extremely regretted that any circumstance should induce you to hesitate about the acceptance of an appointment in which it is not to be doubted your services would be eminently useful.

The paragraph of my former letter which you quote explains to you my conception of the relative rank of the generals in question as resulting from the order of the nominations and appointments. This conception, however, cannot affect the claim of either, if there be any subsisting binding rule in our military code which will arrange the priority of rank between officers nominated on the same day, according to their relative stations in the late army. This will naturally be the subject of some future decision in some proper mode. It is not understood that there has been any formal repeal of the rule to which you allude.

It remains, then, for you to determine whether you will or not accept the appointment, with the reservation of a claim to the benefit of that rule.

TO JAMES McHENRY.

SIR: NEW YORK, Aug. 19, 1798.

An absence from the city, upon some urgent avocations, prevented my receiving till yesterday your letters of the 10th and 11th instant.

I observe the suggestion which you have made to the President towards calling General Knox and myself into immediate service. If he shall approve, I stand ready to execute, in the best manner I shall be able, whatever business may be confided to me; but I must earnestly hope that it will not be attended with the necessity of an immediate change of residence. The nature of my arrangements would render this absolutely ruinous to me, and I trust I shall not be reduced to such an alternative, unless events portending public danger shall ripen faster than, according to present appearances, they are likely to do. I do not object to a frequent attendance at the seat of government, for this can be reconciled with my other engagements, till they can be gradually prepared for a total relinquishment and a new position. With this, I am satisfied, every desir-

able end can be obtained, especially when the promptness of communication between this place and the seat of government is considered. Be assured that none but very imperious motives could induce this hesitation on my part. In accepting the appointment I did not contemplate as probable a speedy dislocation of residence.

The tenor of General Knox' letter, transmitted by you and now returned, occasions to me no small regret and embarrassment. My esteem and friendship for that gentleman would lead me far; but there is a very great difficulty in waiving a station to which, I am well convinced, I have been called, no less by the public voice of the country than by the acts of the Commander-in-Chief and of the President and Senate. The intention as to the relative grades of the officers appointed is presumed to be unequivocal. It is believed that the rule to which General Knox refers can have no application to the case of the formation of a new army at a new epoch, embracing officers not previously *in actual* service.

It was not a permanent provision of law, but a regulation adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the late army, and governing, as far as I can recollect, only in the cases of promotions from lower subsisting grades to higher ones. At the same time, it is very delicate for me to give an opinion in a matter in which I am so personally interested.

I send you back the list of applications which you transmitted to me, with remarks, and with the addition of names. It has been in my power to do little as to candidates in any State but New York. I have supposed that you have had recourse to better sources of information as to others.

TO WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Aug. 20, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

A necessary absence from this city prevented the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant till yesterday.

It is very grateful to me to discover in each succeeding

occurrence a new mark of your friendship towards me. Time will evince that it makes the impression that it ought on my mind.

The effect which the course of the late military appointments has produced on General Knox, though not very unexpected, is very painful to me. I have a respectful sense of his pretensions as an officer, and I have a warm personal regard for him. My embarrassment is not inconsiderable between these sentiments, and what I owe to a reasonable conduct on my own part, both in respect to myself and to the public. It is a fact, that a number of the most influential men in our affairs would think that in waiving the preference given to me I acted a weak part, in a personal view, and an unwarrantable one, in a public view; and General Knox is much mistaken if he does not believe that this sentiment would emphatically prevail in that region to which he supposes his character most interesting. I mean New England.

Yet, my dear sir, I can never consent to see you seriously compromitted or embarrassed. I shall cheerfully place myself in your disposal, and facilitate any arrangement you may think for the general good. It does not, however, seem necessary to precipitate any thing. It may be well to see first what part Gen. Pinckney will act when he arrives.

The Secretary at War has sent me a copy of General Knox' letter to him on the subject of his appointment. It does not absolutely decline, but implies the intention to do it, unless a rule of the late army, giving, in cases of promotion on the same day, priority according to the former relative rank, is understood to govern. I have addressed a reply of which a copy is enclosed.

The commissioners have issued, so that no alteration can now be made as between Generals Knox and Pinckney, if there were not the serious difficulties in the way which you seem to have anticipated.

The Secretary at War has proposed to the President a change of the plan announced in the first instance—which

may bring into immediate activity the Inspector-General and Gen. Knox. In this case you may depend on the best efforts in my power, with a peculiar attention to the objects you mention, and you shall be carefully and fully advised of whatever it interests you to know.

Col. Walker resides at present in the western part of this State. He is occupied in some important agencies for persons abroad, which renders it doubtful whether he would now accept military employment. He has been written to, and will be proposed for the command of a regiment.

Heth is, in many respects, very desirable, in the capacity you mention. But you are, I presume, aware of the impracticability of his temper.

The papers sent by you are now returned.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

MY DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Aug. 21, 1798.

Your two letters of the 9th reached this place during an absence on necessary business which only terminated on Saturday.

Our friend Mr. McHenry has adopted the ideas suggested to him. And you may rely on my effectual co-operation. At the same time, as a total dislocation of residence, to fulfil in all its extent the idea you intimate, would be unqualified ruin to me, I must endeavor to avoid it. Frequent visits and constant communication, and the immediate charge of certain branches of the service will, I doubt not, substantially suffice.

The objects you indicate as deserving primary attention will engage it.

In respect to Mr. Wharton, I shall with pleasure promote whatever may suit him and the service. But I do not know that there is in the establishment any provision for a clerk or secretary to a general officer. It is usual, except in case of the Commander-in-Chief for aides-de-camp to perform the duties of such characters. In reference to *aides*, my situation

is this—I have already yielded to the strong wishes of Mr. and Mrs. Church the promise to appoint their eldest son as one; for the other I must endeavor to find an experienced officer. If Mr. Wharton desires an appointment in some regiment to take his chance for a place in the family of some general officer, I will assist the wish. Let me, if you please, understand this matter with precision.*

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, Aug. 22, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your several letters of May 12th, June the 6th and 8th, have regularly come to hand.

You will be, no doubt, fully instructed of the measures which have taken place on the part of our government, and you will have seen in the numerous addresses to the President a confirmation of the opinion I gave you respecting the disposition of this country. From both you will have derived satisfaction, though you should not think we are yet where we now ought to be. But console yourself with the assurance that we are progressing in good. The indications are to my mind conclusive that we are approaching fast to as great unanimity as any country ever experienced, and that our energies will be displayed in proportion to whatever exigencies shall arise.

I have received several letters from General Miranda. I have written an answer to some of them, which I send you to deliver or not, according to your estimate of what is passing in the scene where you are. Should you deem it expedient to suppress my letter you may do it, and say as much as you think fit on my part in the nature of a communication through you.

With regard to the enterprise in question, I wish it much to be undertaken, but I should be glad that the principal agency was in the United States,—they to furnish the whole

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

land force if necessary. The command in this case would very naturally fall upon me, and I hope I shall disappoint no favorable anticipation. The independence of the separate territory under a moderate government, with the joint guaranty of the co-operating powers, stipulating equal privileges in commerce, would be the sum of the results to be accomplished.

Are we yet ready for this undertaking? Not quite. But we ripen fast, and it may, I think, be rapidly brought to maturity if an efficient negotiation for the purpose is at once set on foot upon this ground. Great Britain cannot alone insure the accomplishment of the object. I have some time since advised certain preliminary steps to prepare the way consistently with national character and justice. I was told they would be pursued, but I am not informed whether they have been or not.

TO FRANCISCO MIRANDA.*

NEW YORK, Aug. 22, 1798.

SIR:

I have lately received by duplicates your letter of the 6th of April, with the postscript of the 9th of June. The gentleman you mention in it has not made his appearance to me, nor do I know of his arrival in this country; so that I can only divine the object from the hints in your letter.

The sentiments I entertain with regard to that object have been long since in your knowledge, but I could personally have no participation in it unless patronized by the government of this country. It was my wish that matters had been ripened for a co-operation in the course of this fall on the part of this country.

* Francisco Miranda, born in Caraccas, 1730, was a South American revolutionist and adventurer. He took part in our war, and then went to France and engaged in the revolution. He served with Dumouriez, was put in prison for his intrigues, was ordered to leave France, and twice afterwards (in 1797 and 1804) expelled. He was always setting on foot abortive revolutions, and finally, in 1811, in an attempt at Caraccas, he was seized and carried to Spain, and died in prison at Cadiz in 1816.

But this can now scarcely be the case. The winter, however, may mature the project, and an effectual co-operation by the United States may take place. In this case I shall be happy, in my official station, to be an instrument of so good a work.

The plan in my opinion ought to be: A fleet of Great Britain, an army of the United States, a government for the liberated territory agreeable to both co-operators, about which there will be no difficulty. To arrange the plan a competent authority from Great Britain to some person here is the best expedient. Your presence here will, in this case, be extremely essential.

We are raising an army of about twelve thousand men. General Washington has resumed his station at the head of our armies. I am appointed second in command.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Aug. 22, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

No one knows better than yourself how difficult and oppressive is the collection even of taxes very moderate in their amount, if there be a defective circulation. According to all the phenomena which fall under my notice, this is our case in the interior parts of the country.

Again, individual capitalists, and consequently the facility of direct loans, are not very extensive in the United States. The banks can only go a certain length, and must not be forced. Yet government will stand in need of large anticipations.

For these and other reasons which I have thought well of, I have come to a conclusion that our Treasury ought to raise up a circulation of its own. I mean by the issuing of Treasury-notes payable, some on demand, others at different periods, from very short to pretty considerable—at first having but little time to run.

This appears to me an expedient equally necessary to keep the circulation full and to facilitate the anticipations which

government will certainly need. By beginning early the public eye will be familiarized, and as emergencies press it will be easy to enlarge without hazard to credit.

Think well of this suggestion, and do not discard it without perceiving well a better substitute.

TO JAMES McHENRY.

NEW YORK, Aug. 25, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I perceive it would be agreeable to the Commander-in-Chief to receive frequent communications from you, and particularly to understand the state of public supplies; that is, the quantities on hand and the measures in execution to procure others.

I give you this hint as a guide, and would advise to have a full statement made out, with notes of what is further doing, and send it to him.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, Aug. 29, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 3d instant came seasonably to hand. Business and absence from this place have delayed the acknowledgment.

The persons you mention have been correspondently placed before the Secretary of War.

As to military affairs, they lag not a little—no appointments of regimental officers yet made. McHenry, as you know, is loaded beyond his strength. It was an obvious idea to derive aid from among general officers; but instead of embracing this recourse, they have all been told that the President hoped they would think it proper to waive the emoluments of their offices till called into actual service.

Steps have been taken towards the correction of this obvious mistake, the success of which now depends on the President, and on that success the alternative of *some* or *no energy*.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, Aug. 29, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your friendly letters of the 21st, 22d, and 23d of August have been duly received. I feel myself at once much flattered and truly indebted for the very favorable opinion of me which you manifest. The good estimation of men of sense and virtue is an ample consolation for the censure and malice of those of a different character, while the expression of your sentiments have all the value which a well-known sincerity and integrity of disposition can give. Be assured that I shall be happy to be ranked by you in the number of your friends. The course of the thing in a particular quarter does not surprise. Besides the direct influence which would be exerted, I am aware that the circumstances of the late election for president have made some unfortunate impressions.

The Commander-in-Chief, I am authorized by his own communications to me to believe, will not easily relinquish the original spirit of the primitive arrangements; but, in the last resort, I shall be inclined to have much deference for his wishes. It is important he should well understand, what I verily believe to be an undoubted fact, that New England would rather see high command in my hands than in those of Gen. Knox.

TO JAMES McHENRY.

NEW YORK, Sept. 8, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

Yours, dated by mistake August 6th, I received yesterday. I postponed a reply till to-day, because I wished first to reflect maturely. My mind is unalterably made up. I shall certainly not hold the commission on the plan proposed, and only wait an official communication to say so.

I return you the enclosures in your letter. You may depend on my fidelity to your friendly confidence. I shall regret whatever of inconvenience may attend you. You

doubtless will take care that you retain in your own power all the evidences of this transaction.

TO WASHINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Sept. 30, 1798.

Your obliging favor of the 24th instant has duly come to hand. I see in it a new proof of sentiments towards me which are truly gratifying. But permit me to add my request to the suggestions of your own prudence that no personal considerations for me may induce more on your part than on mature reflection you may think due to public motives. It is extremely foreign to my wish to create to you the least embarrassment, especially in times like the present, when it is more than ever necessary that the interests of the *whole* should be *paramountly* consulted.

I shall strictly comply with the recommendation in the close of your letter.

TO RUFUS KING.

MY DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Oct. 2, 1798.

Mr. R. delivered me your letter of the 31st of July. The opinion in that and other of your letters concerning a very important point has been acted upon by me from the very moment that it became unequivocal that we must have a decisive rupture with France. In some things my efforts succeeded; in others they were disappointed; in others I have had promises of conformity to lay the foundation of future proceeding, the performance and effect of which promises are not certainly known to me. The effect, indeed, cannot yet be known.

The public mind of this country continues to progress in the right direction. That must influence favorably the present Congress at the ensuing session. The next will be, in all appearance, intrinsically better.

Of the executive I need say little; you know its *excellent* dispositions, its general character, and the composition of

its parts. You know also how widely different the business of government is from the speculation of it, and the energy of the imagination dealing in general propositions from that of *execution* in *detail.*

These are causes from which delay and feebleness are experienced. But the difficulty will be surmounted, and I anticipate with you that this country will, erelong, assume an attitude correspondent with its great destinies—majestic, efficient, and operative of great things. A noble career lies before it.

Why does not Gouverneur Morris come home? His talents are wanted. Men like him do not superabound. Indeed, I wish that you were here rather than where you are, though I think your position an important one at the present juncture. But we want to infuse more abilities into the management of our internal affairs.

Governor Jay is well. He and all your friends continue to take a lively interest in all that concerns you.

TO THE COUNT LATOUR DUPIN GOUVERNET.*

NEW YORK, Oct. 3, 1798.

I had yesterday, my dear sir, the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 15th of July, accompanied by two others, one for Messrs. Le Roy and Bayard, the other for Mr.

* Frederic Seraphin, Marquis de la Tour Du Pin Gouvernet, son of General Jean Frederic Latour Du Pin Gouvernet, Comte de Paulin. General Latour Du Pin, with his cousin, the Marquis Latour Du Pin, were distinguished soldiers and statesmen. They were summoned as witnesses at the trial of Marie Antoinette, and their devotion to the queen only hastened their own doom. They were both guillotined on the same day, in April, 1794. Frederic Seraphin, son of the General, fled to America, bought an estate, no doubt the one referred to in Hamilton's letter, and turned farmer. He returned to Europe after the 9th Thermidor, and to France permanently after the 18th Brumaire, taking service under the Empire. During the Restoration he filled many high posts, but after the revolution of July he was obliged to leave France on account of Legitimist intrigues, and died in exile at Lausanne, in 1837 (Larousse, Dict. Universel). This letter is correctly addressed in the original draft in the State Department, but in the edition of 1850 it is changed to Count Latour Dupin Gouvion. Mr. J. C. Hamilton knew of no officer among our allies

Olive, which will be sent to them in the country, where they now continue, in consequence of the sickness in this city. The letters which you mention to have before written have also been received. To mine I replied shortly after; nor can I imagine how it has happened that you have received no answer from either of the parties.

On the subject of the sale of your farm Mr. Bayard and I myself had a conference, and we agreed that a sale at this time was inexpedient, as it could not be hoped that the farm would bring near its value, owing to the embarrassments in pecuniary operations produced by the prospect of war. I shall, however, now advise that an experiment be made. The offers received, if any, will determine whether a sale can take place without an imprudent sacrifice for you, and the result can be regulated accordingly.

Be assured, my dear sir, that I shall be happy to be useful to you in this or any other matter. In doing so, I shall equally gratify the esteem and friendship with which you have inspired me for yourself, and that lively and affecting interest in whatever concerns Madame de Gouvernet, which cannot but be felt by all who have had an opportunity to know her value.

If it shall conduce to her and your happiness to return to this country, it will certainly add to ours; and if you will beforehand apprise me of your resolution, when taken, and your general plan, you will find me zealous to co-operate in giving it effect.

I would invite you to return with the more confidence from the assurance in the stability of affairs in this country, which is derived from the late happy course of the public mind. An extraordinary union among the people in the support of their

by such a name as Gouvernet, whereas there was one named Gouvion, and for this reason, apparently, he printed it Gouvion. Jean Baptiste Gouvion was an officer in the war, but he had no connection whatever with the Latour Dupin family, except that his last name, like theirs, began with G. If Mr. J. C. Hamilton had either looked up the Latour Dupin family, or if he had recollected that Frenchmen came to America in other capacities than that of military allies, he would have saved himself from the complicated blunder which he made in the address of this letter.

own government, and in resistance to all foreign encroachments, leaves nothing to be feared for our future security and prosperity. The most reasonable ideas in every respect prevail.

Accept, whenever you shall come, under the roof of Mrs. Hamilton and myself, an asylum where you may be perfectly at home until you shall have completed your arrangements for your future establishment. She joins me in cordial remembrance to Madame de Gouvernet and yourself.

TO WILLIAM HETH.*

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Dec. 18, 1798.

Your letter of the 30th of July was duly received. It gave me much pleasure as a proof of your friendly remembrance, and as an indication that you were not disposed to be idle in a crisis of national danger. You are indeed one of those men who cannot be permitted to be idle, and you will no doubt be called to take the field in some eligible station, if the impending storm shall not subside. You can imagine the multiplicity and extent of my avocations, and I hope you will make a kind allowance for my silence. Attribute it to any thing but want of regard for you; on this score depend that I have no retribution to make, being very cordially and truly yours, etc.

P. S—What do the factions in your State really aim at? †

TO HARRISON GREY OTIS.‡

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Dec. 27, 1798.

I did not receive till yesterday your letter dated 21st instant. No apology was necessary for so gratifying a

* William Heth, of Virginia, a gallant soldier of the revolution who now came forward to again offer his services in case of war.

† Reprinted from "Reminiscences of James A. Hamilton," p. 38.

‡ Harrison Grey Otis, of Boston, distinguished as a lawyer and orator. At this time member of Congress and one of the younger Federalist leaders. He was afterwards, 1817–1822, United States Senator, and died in 1848, at the age of eighty-three.

mark of your good opinion, upon which I set the high value it so justly deserves.

In the enclosed extract of a letter to another of the government, you will find my ideas generally on the subject of your letter. I adopt this method of communication as equally effectual and best adapted to the multiplicity of my avocations. Some additional remarks in direct reference to your particular questions, may perhaps be requisite to fulfil your object.

Any reduction of the actual force appears to me inexpedient. It will argue to our enemy that we are either very narrow in our resources, or that our jealousy of his designs are abated. Besides, that with a view to the possibility of internal disorders alone, the force authorized is not too considerable. The efficacy of militia for suppressing such disorders is not too much to be relied upon. The experience of the Western expedition ought not to be [forgotten?]. That was a very uphill business. There were more than once appearances to excite alarm as to the perseverance of the troops, and it is not easy to foresee what might have been the result had there been serious resistance. The repetition of similar exertions may be found very difficult, insomuch as to render it extremely [needful?], in these precarious times, to have the government armed with the whole of the force which has been voted.

There are several defects in the military establishment which demand reform as well for economy as efficiency. On these there has been an ample communication from the Commander-in-Chief to the Department of War. I cannot conceive why nothing has yet gone to Congress. Certainly this cannot be much longer delayed. Will it be amiss *informally* to interrogate the Minister? If the silence is persisted in, you shall know from me the objects.

The extract answers your question as to the provisional army. I think the act respecting the eighty thousand militia ought likewise to be revived. The effect abroad will

be good, and it will likewise be so at home, as the evidence of a reliance of the government on the militia.

Good policy does not appear to me to require extensive appropriations for fortifications at the *present juncture.* Money can be more usefully employed in other ways. A good deal of previous examination ought to lead to a plan for fortifying three or four *cardinal* points. More than this will be a misapplication of money. Secure positions for arsenals and dock-yards are in this view a primary object.

Your last question respecting the West India Islands I shall reserve for a future communication.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

1798.*

DEAR SIR:

I have been reading the report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the subject of direct taxes. I think it does him credit. The general principles and [illegible]cts are certainly good, nor am I sure that any thing [illegible] can be done.

I remember, however, that I once promised you to put in writing my ideas on the subject. I intended to have done it and communicated them to the Secretary. My hurry and press of business prevented me; but I concluded lately to devote an evening to a rude sketch, and to send it to you. You may show it to the Secretary and confer. If, in the course of the thing, it can be useful to the general end we all have in view, it will give me pleasure; if not, there will have been but little time misspent. Of course, no use will be made of it in contradiction to the views of the Treasury Department.

As to the part which relates to land, I do not feel any strong preference of my plan to that in the report; for this, in my opinion, ought to be considered only as an auxiliary, and not as the *pith* of the tax. But I own I have a

* This is the date and place given this letter in the edition of 1850. The original is undated.

strong preference of my plan of a house-tax to that in the report. These are my reasons:

It is more comprehensive, embracing all houses, and will be proportionately more productive. It is more certain, avoiding the evasions and partialities to which valuations will be for ever liable, and I think it for that reason likely to be at least as equal. I entertain no doubt that the rule of rates, adapted as they are to characteristic circumstances, will in fact be more favorable to equality than appraisements. I think the idea of taxing only houses of above a certain annual value will be dissatisfactory. The comparison of the proprietors of houses immediately above with those immediately below the line will beget discontent, and the errors of valuations will increase it.

I think there will be a great advantage in throwing the weight of the tax *on houses*, as well because lands are more difficult to manage as because it will fall in a manner less dissatisfactory.

My plan as to houses can be easily combined with that in the report as to land.

Some years ago I proposed a similar plan in the Legislature of this State. It went through three readings and had a great majority in its favor, but as it was essentially different from what had always before obtained in the State it was thought best to postpone, to feel the sense of constituents. I left the Legislature—changes in our political situation rendered the plan of State taxation less important, and the business shrunk out of sight. But there was every appearance that the plan would have been popular in this State.

You observe I confine myself to a million. I would not bear hard in this way. I would add, as aid, the taxes contemplated last session—on stamps, collateral successions, new modifications of some articles of imports, and, let me add, *saddle*-horses. The idea of taxing slaves generally will not work well. If confined to all menial servants for luxury, as coachmen, footmen, cooks, etc., it would be eligible.

TO JONATHAN DAYTON.*

1799.

An accurate view of the internal situation of the United States presents many discouraging reflections to the enlightened friends of our government and country. Notwithstanding the unexampled success of our public measures at home and abroad—notwithstanding the instructive comments afforded by the disastrous and disgusting scenes of the French Revolution—public opinion has not been ameliorated; sentiments dangerous to social happiness have not been diminished; on the contrary, there are symptoms which warrant the apprehension that among the most numerous class of citizens, errors of a very pernicious tendency have not only preserved but have extended their empire. Though some thing may have been gained on the side of men of information and property, more has probably been lost on that of persons of a different description. An extraordinary exertion of the friends of government, aided by circumstances of momentary impression, gave, in the last election for members of Congress, a more favorable countenance to some States than they had before worn; yet it is the belief of well-informed men that no real or desirable change has been wrought in those States. On the other hand, it is admitted by close observers that some of the parts of the Union which, in times past, have been the soundest, have of late exhibited signs of a gangrene begun and progressive.

It is likewise apparent that opposition to the government has acquired more system than formerly, is bolder in the avowal of its designs, less solicitous than it was to discriminate between the Constitution and the administration, and more open and more enterprising in its projects. The late attempt of Virginia and Kentucky to unite the State Legislatures in a direct resistance to certain laws of the Union

* Of New Jersey, at this time Speaker of the national House. This letter, like the preceding, has no date in the original, and is placed and dated according to the edition of 1850.

can be considered in no other light than as an attempt to change the government.

It is stated in addition that the opposition party in Virginia, the head-quarters of the faction, have followed up the hostile declarations which are to be found in the resolutions of their General Assembly by an actual preparation of the means of supporting them by force, that they have taken measures to put their militia on a more efficient footing—are preparing considerable arsenals and magazines, and (which is an unequivocal proof how much they are in earnest) have gone so far as to lay new taxes on their citizens. Amidst such serious indications of hostility, the safety and the duty of the supporters of the government call upon them to adopt vigorous measures of counteraction. It will be wise in them to act upon the hypothesis that the opposers of the government are resolved, if it shall be practicable, to make its existence a question of force. Possessing, as they now do, all the constitutional powers, it will be an unpardonable mistake on their part if they do not exert them to surround the Constitution with more ramparts and to disconcert the schemes of its enemies.

The measures proper to be adopted may be classed under heads.

FIRST.—Establishments which will extend the influence and promote the popularity of the government. Under this head three important expedients occur. *First.* The extension of the judiciary system. *Second.* The improvement of the great communications, as well interiorly as coastwise, by turnpike roads. *Third.* The institution of a society with funds to be employed in premiums for new inventions, discoveries, and improvements in agriculture and in the arts.

The extension of the judiciary system ought to embrace two objects: one, the subdivision of each State into small districts (suppose Connecticut into four, and so on in proportion), assigning to each a judge with a moderate salary; the other, the appointment in each county of conservators

or justices of the peace, with only ministerial functions, and with no other compensation than fees for the services they shall perform. This measure is necessary to give efficacy to the laws, the execution of which is obstructed by the want of similar organs and by the indisposition of the local magistrates in some States. The Constitution requires that *judges* shall have fixed salaries; but this does not apply to mere justices of the peace without judicial powers. Both those descriptions of persons are essential, as well to the energetic execution of the laws as to the purposes of salutary patronage.

The thing, no doubt, would be a subject of clamor, but it would carry with it its own antidote, and when once established, would bring a very powerful support to the government.

The improvement of the roads would be a measure universally popular. None can be more so. For this purpose a regular plan should be adopted, co-extensive with the Union, to be successively executed, and a fund should be appropriated sufficient for the basis of a loan of a million of dollars. The revenue of the post-office naturally offers itself. The future revenue from tolls would more than reimburse the expense, and public utility would be promoted in every direction. The institution of a society, with the aid of proper funds, to encourage agriculture and the arts, besides being productive of general advantage, will speak powerfully to the feelings and interests of those classes of men to whom the benefits derived from the government have been heretofore the least manifest.

SECOND.—Provision for augmenting the means and consolidating the strength of the government. A million of dollars may without difficulty be added to the revenue, by increasing the rates of some existing indirect taxes, and by the addition of some new items of a similar character.

The direct taxes ought neither to be increased nor diminished. Our naval force ought to be completed to six ships of the line, twelve frigates, and twenty-four sloops of war.

More at this juncture would be disproportioned to our resources, less would be inadequate to the ends to be accomplished. Our military force should, for the present, be kept upon its actual footing; making provision for a re-enlistment of the men for five years in the event of a settlement of differences with France,—with this condition, that in case of peace between Great Britain, France, and Spain, the United States being then also at peace, all the privates of the twelve additional regiments of infantry, and of the regiment of dragoons, not exceeding twenty to a company, shall be disbanded. The corps of artillerists may be left to retain the numbers which it shall happen to have, but without being recruited until the number of officers and privates shall fall below the standard of the infantry and dragoons. A power ought to be given to the President to augment the four old regiments to their war establishment.

The laws respecting volunteer companies, and the *eventual army*, should be rendered permanent, and the Executive should proceed without delay to organize the latter. Some modifications of the discretion of the President will, however, be proper in a permanent law. And it will be a great improvement of the plan, if it shall be thought expedient to allow the enlistment, for the purpose of instruction, of a corps of sergeants equal to the number requisite for the eventual army. The institution of a military academy will be an auxiliary of great importance. Manufactories of every article, the woollen parts of clothing included, which are essential to the supply of the army, ought to be established.

THIRD.—Arrangements for confirming and enlarging the legal powers of the government. There are several temporary laws which, in this view, ought to be rendered permanent, particularly that which authorizes the calling out of the militia to suppress unlawful combinations and insurrections.

An article ought to be proposed, to be added to the Constitution, for empowering Congress to open canals in all cases in which it may be necessary to conduct them through

the territory of two or more States, or through the territory of a State and that of the United States. The power is very desirable for the purpose of improving the prodigious facilities for inland navigation with which nature has favored this country. It will also assist commerce and agriculture, by rendering the transportation of commodities more cheap and expeditious. It will tend to secure the connection, by facilitating the communication between distant portions of the Union, and it will be a useful source of influence to the government. Happy would it be if a clause could be added to the Constitution, enabling Congress, on the application of any considerable portion of a State, containing not less than a hundred thousand persons, to erect it into a separate State, on the condition of fixing the quota of contributions which it shall make towards antecedent debts, if any there shall be, reserving to Congress the authority to levy within such State the taxes necessary to the payment of such quota, in case of neglect on the part of the State. *The subdivision of the great States is indispensable to the security of the general government, and with it of the Union.*

Great States will always feel a rivalship with the common head; will often be supposed to machinate against it, and in certain situations will be able to do it with decisive effect. The subdivision of such States ought to be a cardinal point in the federal policy, and small States are doubtless best adapted to the purposes of local regulation and to the preservation of the republican spirit. This suggestion, however, is merely thrown out for consideration. It is feared that it would be inexpedient and even dangerous to propose, *at this time*, an amendment of the kind.

FOURTH.—Laws for restraining and punishing incendiary and seditious practices. It will be useful to declare that all such writings, etc., which at common law are libels, if levelled against any officer whatsoever of the United States, shall be cognizable in the courts of the United States. To preserve confidence in the officers of the general government, by preserving their reputations from malicious and

unfounded slanders, is essential to enable them to fulfil the ends of their appointment. It is, therefore, both constitutional and politic to place their reputations under the guardianship of the courts of the United States. They ought not to be left to the cold and reluctant protection of State courts, always temporizing, and sometimes disaffected. But what avail laws which are not executed? Renegade aliens conduct more than one of the most incendiary presses in the United States—and yet, in open contempt and defiance of the laws, they are permitted to continue their destructive labors. Why are they not sent away? Are laws of this kind passed merely to excite odium and remain a dead letter? Vigor in the executive is at least as necessary as in the legislative branch. If the President requires to be stimulated, those who can approach him ought to do it.

TO LAFAYETTE.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Jan. 6, 1799.

I have been made happy, my dear friend, by the receipt of your letter of the 12th of August last. No explanation of your political principles was necessary to satisfy me of the perfect consistency and purity of your conduct. The interpretation may always be left to my attachment for you. Whatever difference of opinion may on any occasion exist between us, it can never lessen my conviction of the goodness both of your head and heart. I expect from you a return of this sentiment so far as concerns the heart. 'T is needless to detail to you my political tenets. I shall only say that I hold with *Montesquieu*, that a government must be fitted to a nation, as much as a coat to the individual; and, consequently, that what may be good at Philadelphia may be bad at Paris, and ridiculous at Petersburgh.

I join with you in regretting the misunderstanding between our two countries. You will have seen by the President's speech that a door is again opened for terminating them amicably. And you may be assured that we are sincere, and

that it is in the power of France, by reparation to our merchants for past injury, and the stipulation of justice in future, to put an end to the controversy.

But I do not much like the idea of your being any way implicated in the affair, lest you should be compromitted in the opinion of one or the other of the parties. It is my opinion that it is best for you to stand aloof. Neither have I abandoned the idea that it is most advisable for you to remain in Europe till the difference is adjusted. It would be very difficult for you here to steer a course which would not place you in a party, and not remove you from the broad ground which you now occupy in the hearts of all. It is a favorite point with me that you shall find in the universal regard of this country all the consolations which the loss of your own (for so I consider it) may render requisite.

Mrs. Church and Mrs. Hamilton unite in assurance of their affectionate remembrance.

TO HARRISON GREY OTIS.

NEW YORK, Jan. 26, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

You will recollect that I reserved for a future answer part of a letter which I had the pleasure of receiving from you some time since. These are my ideas on that subject.

I should be glad to see, before the close of the session, a law empowering the President, at his discretion, in case a negotiation between the United States and France should not be on foot by the first of August next, or being on foot should terminate without an adjustment of differences, to declare that a state of war exists between the two countries, and thereupon to employ the land and naval forces of the United States in such manner as shall appear to him most effectual for annoying the enemy, and for preventing and frustrating hostile designs of France, either directly or *indirectly through any of her allies.*

This course of proceeding, by postponing the event, and giving time for the intervention of negotiation, would be a

further proof of moderation in the government, and would tend to reconcile our citizens to the last extremity, if it shall ensue, gradually accustoming their minds to look forward to it.

If France be really desirous of accommodation, this plan will accelerate her measures to bring it about. If she have not that desire, it is best to anticipate her final vengeance, and to throw whatever weight we have into the scale opposed to her. This conduct may contribute to disable her to do the mischief which she may meditate.

As it is every moment possible that the project of taking possession of the Floridas and Louisiana, long since attributed to France, may be attempted to be put in execution, it is very important that the Executive should be clothed with power to meet and defeat so dangerous an enterprise. Indeed, if it is the policy of France to leave us in a state of semi-hostility, 't is preferable to terminate it, and by taking possession of those countries for ourselves, to obviate the mischief of their falling into the hands of an active foreign power, and at the same time to secure to the United States the advantage of keeping the key to the Western country. I have been long in the habit of considering the acquisition of those countries as essential to the permanency of the Union, which I consider as very important to the welfare of the whole.

If universal empire is still to be the pursuit of France, what can tend to defeat the purpose better than to detach South America from Spain, which is only the channel through which the riches of *Mexico and Peru* are conveyed to France? The Executive ought to be put in a situation to embrace favorable conjunctures for effecting that separation, 'T is to be regretted that the preparation of an adequate military force does not advance more rapidly. There is some sad nonsense on this subject in some good heads. The reveries of some of the friends of the government are more injurious to it than the attacks of its declared enemies.

When will men learn to profit by experience?

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

February 2, 1799.

What, my dear sir, are you going to do in Virginia? This is a very serious business, which will call for all the wisdom and firmness of the government. The following are the ideas which occur to me on the occasion. The first thing in all great operations of such a government as ours is to secure the opinion of the people. To this end the proceedings of Virginia and Kentucky, with the two laws complained of,* should be referred to a special committee. That committee should make a report, exhibiting with great luminousness and particularity the reasons which support the constitutionality and expediency of those laws, the tendency of the doctrines advanced by Virginia and Kentucky to destroy the Constitution of the United States, and with calm dignity united with pathos the full evidence which they afford of a regular conspiracy to overturn the government. And the report should likewise dwell upon the inevitable effect, and probably the intention, of the proceedings to encourage hostile foreign powers to decline accommodation and proceed in hostility.

The government must not merely defend itself, it must attack and arraign its enemies. But in all this there should be great care to distinguish the people of Virginia from their Legislature, and even the greater part of those who may have concurred in the Legislature from their chiefs, manifesting, indeed, a strong confidence in the good sense and patriotism of the people that they will not be the dupes of an insidious plan to disunite the people of America, to break down their Constitution, and expose them to the enterprise of a foreign power. This report should conclude with a declaration that there is no cause for a repeal of the laws. If, however, on examination, any modifications consistent with the general design of the laws, but instituting better guards, can be devised, it may be well to propose

* The Alien and Sedition laws.

them as a bridge for those who may incline to retreat over. Concessions of this kind, adroitly made, have a good rather than a bad effect. On a recent, though hasty, revision of the Alien law, it seems to me deficient in precautions against abuse and for the security of citizens. This should not be. No pains or expense should be spared to disseminate this report. A little pamphlet containing it should find its way into every house in Virginia. This should be left to work, and nothing to court a shock should be adopted. In the meantime the measures for raising the military force should proceed with activity. 'T is much to be lamented that so much delay has attended the execution of this measure. In times like the present, not a moment ought to have been lost to secure the government so powerful an auxiliary. Whenever the experiment shall be made to subdue a refractory and powerful State by militia, the event will shame the advocates of their sufficiency. In the expedition against the Western insurgents, I trembled every moment lest a great part of the militia should take it into their heads to return home rather than to go forward. When a clever force has been collected, let them be drawn toward Virginia, for which there is an obvious pretext, then let measures be taken to act upon the laws and put Virginia to the test of resistance. This plan will give time for the fervor of the moment to subside, for reason to resume the reins, and, by dividing its enemies, will enable the government to triumph with ease.*

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, Feb. 9, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I am this moment favored with your letter of the 9th instant. I shall immediately reflect on the most important point, and to-morrow give you the result.

The provision in the law is ample. But in this, my dear

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vii., 277.

sir, as in every thing else, we must unite caution with decision. The United States must not be committed on the independence of St. Domingo. No guaranty—no formal treaty—nothing that can rise up in judgment. It will be enough to let Toussaint be assured verbally, but explicitly, that upon his declaration of independence a commercial intercourse will be opened, and continue while he maintains it, and gives due protection to our vessels and property. I incline to think the declaration of independence ought to precede.

TO WASHINGTON.

(*Private.*)

NEW YORK, Feb. 16, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

Different reasons have conspired to prevent my writing to you since my return to New York—the multiplicity of my avocations, an imperfect state of health, and the want of some thing material to communicate.

The official letter herewith transmitted, will inform you of the disposition of our military affairs which has been recently adopted by the department of war. There shall be no want of exertion on my part to promote the branches of the service confided to my care.

But I more and more discover cause to apprehend that obstacles of a very peculiar kind stand in the way of an efficient and successful management of our military concerns. These it would be unsafe at present to explain.

It may be useful that I should be able to write to you hereafter some confidential matters relating to our administration without the mention of names. When this happens, I shall designate the President by X, the Secretary of State by V, of the Treasury by I, and of the Department of War by C.

Every thing in the northern quarter, as far as I can learn, continues favorable to the government.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, Feb. 21, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR:

The multiplicity of my avocations joined to imperfect health has delayed the communication you desired respecting St. Domingo. And what is worse, it has prevented my bestowing sufficient thought to offer at present any thing worth having.

No regular system of liberty will at present suit St. Domingo. The government, if independent, must be military—partaking of the feodal system.

A hereditary chief would be best, but this I fear is impracticable.

Let there be then, a single Executive, to hold his place for life.

The person to succeed or a vacancy to be either the officer *next in command in the island at the time of the death* of the predecessor, or the person who by plurality of voices of the commandants of regiments shall be designated within a certain time. In the meantime the principal military officers to administer.

All the males within certain ages to be arranged in military corps, and to be compellable to military service. This may be connected with the tenure of lands.

Let the supreme judiciary authority be vested in twelve judges to be chosen for life by the *generals* or chief military officers.

Trial by jury in all criminal causes not military to be established. The mode of appointing them must be regulated with reference to the general spirit of the establishment.

Every law inflicting capital or other corporal punishment, or levying a tax or contribution in any shape, to be proposed by the Executive to an assembly composed of the generals and commandants of regiments for their sanction or rejection.

All other laws to be enacted by the sole authority of the Executive.

The powers of war and treaty to be in the Executive.

The Executive to be obliged to have three ministers—of finance, war, and foreign affairs—whom he shall nominate to the generals for their approbation or rejection.

The colonels and generals, when once appointed to, hold their offices during good behavior, removed only by conviction of an infamous crime in due course of law or the sentence of a court-martial cashiering them.

Court-martials for trial of officers and capital offences to be not less than twelve, and well guarded as to mode of appointment.

Duties of import and export, taxes on lands and buildings to constitute the chief branches of revenue.

These thoughts are very crude, but perhaps they may afford some hints.

How is the sending an agent to Toussaint to encourage the independency of St. Domingo, and a minister to France to negotiate an accommodation reconcilable to consistency or good faith?*

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, Feb. 21, 1799.

The step announced in your letter just received, in all its circumstances, would astonish, if any thing from that quarter could astonish.

But as it has happened, my present impression is that the measure must go into effect with the additional idea of a commission of three.

The mode must be accommodated with the President. *Murray* is certainly not strong enough for so immensely important a mission.†

I will write to-morrow if my impression varies.

* Now first printed from the Pickering papers in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

† This letter refers to the message of John Adams of February 18, 1799, announcing his intention of reopening negotiations with France and nominating William Vans Murray as Minister to the French Republic. This action on the part of the President, taken without consulting even his Cabinet, astonished the country and fell like a thunderbolt upon the Federalists.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, March 13, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

It is natural for people, where their interest is concerned, to die hard. Mr. Juhel, the bearer of this, goes to Philadelphia to lay before you some supplementary evidence with regard to the ship Germania, which he hopes may vary your determination. At his request I give him this line to you, merely to say that he is a merchant of this city, of reputation, and, so far as his conduct has fallen under my observation, of candor and probity. I wish him success as far as personal considerations alone are concerned and no general rule of policy is contravened.

But having occasion to write you on a subject connected with the law prohibiting intercourse with the French territories, I ought not to withhold from you an opinion which I deliberately entertain. It is that whatever may have been the intention of the Legislature in framing this law, it is in fact so worded that it will be a very violent thing in a court of justice to pronounce that the prohibition of the third section extends to any but a *French bottom.*

The leading and prominent feature of the prohibition, as to the subject, is a "*French ship or vessel.*" There are subsequent words which, by implication, look to vessels of other descriptions, but they may be understood consistently with the *main and preliminary feature.*

Thus the proviso excepts ships or vessels "*bona fide* the *property of*, or hired or employed by, the citizens of the United States." A French bottom, by her build and registry, may be the property of citizens of the United States. Again, these words will be satisfied by supposing that they intend ships and vessels which were French immediately before the voyage in question, but were purchased for the voyage by citizens of the United States.

And this construction will better consist with the principles which govern the interpretation of penal laws, than to extend the prohibition which is to constitute the penalty beyond

the letter by implication and force of a proviso which is introduced to make an *exception* to the general terms.

I am well aware of the course which in such a case policy will dictate to the Executive, but if this view of the law be correct, it may afford an argument for a mitigated course where no actual intention to evade appears.*

TO GENERAL KNOX.

NEW YORK, March 14, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR:

The enclosed letters, as I concluded from others which accompany them, have been a long time getting to hand. There was a moment when their object seemed to present itself as one not entirely chimerical, but the probability has diminished. 'T is, however, a thing on which the mind may still speculate as in the chapter of extraordinary events which characterize the present wonderful epoch.

My judgment tells me I ought to be silent on a certain subject; but my heart advises otherwise, and my heart has always been the master of my judgment. Believe me I have felt much pain at the idea, that any circumstance personal to me should have deprived the public of your services or occasioned to you the smallest dissatisfaction. Be persuaded, also, that the views of others, not my own, have given shape to what has taken place—and that there has been a serious struggle between my respect and attachment for you and the impression of duty. This sounds, I know, like affectation, but it is nevertheless the truth. In a case in which such great public interests were concerned, it seemed to me the dictate of reason and propriety, not to exercise an opinion of my own, but to leave that of others, who could influence the issue, to take a free course. In saying this much, my only motive is to preserve, if I may, a

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

claim on your friendly disposition towards me, and to give you some evidence that my regard for you is unabated.*

TO JAMES McHENRY.

(*Private.*)

NEW YORK, March 18, 1799.

Beware, my dear sir, of magnifying a riot into an insurrection, by employing, in the first instance, an inadequate force. 'T is better far to err on the other side.

Whenever the government appears in arms, it ought to appear like a *Hercules*, and inspire respect by the display of strength. The consideration of expense is of no moment compared with the advantages of energy. 'T is true this is always a relative question, but 't is always important to make no mistake. I only offer a *principle* and a *caution*.

A large corps of auxiliary cavalry may be had in Jersey, New York, Delaware, Maryland, without interfering with farming pursuits.

Will it be inexpedient to put under marching orders a large force provisionally, as an eventual support of the corps to be employed, to awe the disaffected?

Let all be well considered. †

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT. ‡

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, March 21, 1799.

It is a good principle for the United States to employ directly its own means, only do not let this be carried so far as to confine it to the use of inadequate means, or to embarrass the auxiliary means which circumstances may require.

* This last paragraph refers to Hamilton's having been placed at the head of the provisional army, which had so much chagrined Knox that he had resigned his commission.

† Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vii., 313.

‡ This letter and the preceding refer to the troubles which became known as the Fries rebellion, and which grew out of the resistance in Pennsylvania to the direct taxes. The disturbances were violent and riotous, and at last the President issued a proclamation and ordered out some troops, and the whole affair ended. Fries was arrested, tried, convicted of treason, sentenced to death, and pardoned by President Adams.

The idea of the late President's administration of considering the governor of each State as the first general of the militia, and its immediate organ in acting upon the militia, was wisely considered, and, in my opinion, wisely adopted, and well to be adhered to. In its final operation, it will obviate many difficulties and collisions, and by enhancing their importance, tend to draw the State Executives to the general government. Take good care that in the present instance the force be not inadequate.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

SIR: NEW YORK, April 4, 1799.

I observe, by the Boston papers, that some dispatches have been lately found on board a vessel from this port which was carried into Gibraltar. The late consul here, Mr. Rosier, has just been with me, and suggested that the dispatches are probably from him, and allude (but without naming me) to some conversations with me relating to his being received as consul-general some time last winter. Being so much engaged as not to have been able conveniently to call upon you, I mentioned the subject while in Philadelphia to Mr. Wolcott, and was informed by him that Mr. Rosier could not then be received. In the interviews respecting this object, some general conversation took place about the state of things between the two countries. Mr. Rosier will write to you offering the means of deciphering his dispatches, which he assures me, with every appearance of candor, will be found to contain nothing unfriendly to this country. It is his wish, in the meantime, that no idea may circulate of his being a conspirator.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, April 8, 1799.

I send you in confidence the copy of a letter of this date to the Secretary of War and of the plan to which it refers. Consider it well. Make the Secretary of War talk to you

about it, without letting him know that I have sent it to you. And urge the establishment of some plan which will effectually organize this important branch of our military service. The proper course in the interest of the army is indicated by the plan I present. The connections between the agents with the army and the principal officers at the seat of the government admit of such modifications as may be deemed best. I think it desirable to separate the quartermaster-general from the business of procuring supplies, and make him and his deputies, in this respect, checks. In addition to this duty he will have numerous military functions of great importance which will give him abundant employment.*

TO WASHINGTON.

(*Private.*)

NEW YORK, June 15, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I wrote to you a few days since, chiefly to inform you of the progress of the measures respecting the recruiting service, and that the symptoms with regard to it were sufficiently promising. The accounts continue favorable.

I have just received a letter from General Wilkinson,† dated the 13th April, in which he assures me he will set out in the ensuing month for the seat of government. The interview with him will be useful.

It strikes me forcibly that it will be both right and expedient to advance this gentleman to the grade of major-

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society.

† James Wilkinson, a soldier of the Revolution, and conspicuous at the time of Burr's conspiracy and in the War of 1812. He was a born intriguer. During the revolutionary war he was mixed up in the Conway cabal. He was involved with Burr, whom he finally decided to give up, at the time of the latter's conspiracy, and in the War of 1812 he was singularly unsuccessful and contentious. Hamilton's apparently favorable opinion is rather curious, although it is obvious that he recommends Wilkinson's promotion with many doubts.

general. He has been long steadily in service and long a brigadier. This in so considerable an extension of the military establishment gives him a pretension to promotion.

I am aware that some doubts have been entertained of him, and that his character on certain sides gives room for doubts. Yet he is at present in the service, is a man of more than ordinary talent—of courage and enterprise,—has discovered upon various occasions a good zeal, has embraced military pursuits as a profession, and will naturally find his interest, as an ambitious man, in deserving the favor of the government. While he will be apt to become disgusted if neglected, and through disgust may be rendered really what he is now only suspected to be. Under such circumstances it seems to me good policy to avoid all just grounds of discontent and to make it the interest of the individual to pursue his duty.

If you should be also of this opinion, I submit to your consideration whether it would not be advisable for you to express it in a private letter to the Secretary of War.*

TO COLONEL TAYLOR.†

NEW YORK, July 3, 1799.

SIR:

I have written to the Secretary of War agreeably to the suggestion of your letter of the 26th of June, respecting Abijah Fenn. It is to be lamented that the most circumspect men are apt to have too much facility about recommendations. Warned by this instance, it is hoped that you will in future not present a candidate without personal knowledge or inquiry through various channels.

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

† I have not been able to determine absolutely the identity of Col. Taylor, but I think it must have been Robert Barnard Taylor, of Virginia, afterwards Brigadier-General of Virginia militia, and finally General in the regular army. This letter is now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

TO JAMES McHENRY.

(*Private.*)

NEW YORK, July 10, 1799.

Why, my dear friend, do you suffer the business of providing to go on as it does? Every moment proves the insufficiency of the existing plan and the necessity of auxiliaries. I have no doubt that at Baltimore, New York, Providence, and Boston additional supplies of clothing may promptly be procured and prepared by your agents, and it ought to be done, though it should enhance the expense. 'T is terrible at this juncture that there should be wants anywhere.

So of tents. Calls for them are repeated from Massachusetts, where, better and cheaper than anywhere else, they can certainly be provided.

Pray, take a resolution adequate to the emergency, and rescue the credit of your department.*

TO JOSIAH O. HOFFMAN.†

SIR: 1799.

Greenleaf's *New Daily Advertiser* of this morning contains a publication entitled, "Extract of a Letter from Philadelphia, dated September 20th," which charges me with being at the "bottom of an effort recently made to suppress the *Aurora*" (a newspaper of that city) by pecuniary means.

It is well known that I have long been the object of the most malignant calumnies of the faction opposed to our government through the medium of the papers devoted to their views. Hitherto I have forborne to resort to the laws for the punishment of the authors or abettors, and were I to consult personal considerations alone, I should continue in this course, repaying hatred with contempt.

But public motives now compel me to a different conduct.

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

† Attorney-General of New York. This letter is undated in original, and is dated and placed here according to the edition of 1850. It was probably written in September or October of this year.

The designs of that faction to overturn our government, and with it the great pillars of social security and happiness in this country, become every day more manifest, and have of late acquired a degree of system which renders them formidable.

One principal engine for effecting the scheme is by audacious falsehoods to destroy the confidence of the people in all those who are in any degree conspicuous among the supporters of the government—an engine which has been employed in time past with too much success, and which, unless counteracted in future, is likely to be attended with very fatal consequences.

To counteract it is therefore a duty to the community. Among the specimens of this contrivance, that which is the subject of the present letter demands peculiar attention. A bolder calumny—one more absolutely destitute of foundation—was never propagated, and its dangerous tendency needs no comment; being calculated to inspire the belief that the independence and liberty of the press are endangered by the intrigues of ambitious citizens aided by foreign gold. In so flagrant a case the force of the laws must be tried.

I therefore request that you will take immediate measures towards the prosecution of the persons who conduct the enclosed paper.

TO WASHINGTON.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Oct. 21, 1799.

On my return from Trenton the day before yesterday I found your private letter of the 13th as well as your public letter of the 15th instant.

The newspapers have probably informed you that poor Avery is dead of the yellow fever.

The President has resolved to send the commissioners to France, notwithstanding the change of affairs there. He is not understood to have consulted either of his ministers; certainly not either the Secretary of War or of Finance.

All my calculations lead me to regret the measure. I hope that it may not in its consequences involve the United States in a war on the side of France with her enemies.

My trust in Providence, which has so often interposed in our favor, is my only consolation.

TO TOBIAS LEAR.*

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, Jan. 2, 1800.

Your letter of the 15th of December last was delayed in getting to hand by the circumstance of its having gone to New York while I was at Philadelphia, and of its having arrived at Philadelphia after I had set out on my return to New York.

The very painful event which it announces had, previous to the receipt of it, filled my heart with bitterness. Perhaps no man in this community has equal cause with myself to deplore the loss. I have been much indebted to the kindness of the General, and he was an *Ægis very essential to me.* But regrets are unavailing. For great misfortunes it is the business of reason to seek consolation. The friends of General Washington have very noble ones. If virtue can secure happiness in another world, he is happy. In this the seal is now put upon *his* glory. It is no longer in jeopardy from the fickleness of fortune.

P. S.—In whose hands are his papers gone? Our very confidential situation will not permit this to be a point of indifference to me.

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, Jan. 5, 1800.

It is indeed a long time, my dear sir, since I have written to you, and I feel my obligation to you for the continuance of your correspondence, notwithstanding my delinquency.

* Washington's private secretary.

Had it been true that I had left every thing else to follow the drum, my delinquency would not have been so great. But our military establishment offers too little inducement, and is too precarious to have permitted a total dereliction of professional pursuits. The double occupation occasioned by these added military duties, and the attention which circumstances call me to pay to collateral objects, engage my time more than ever, and leave me less leisure to communicate with distant friends.

If the projected cipher was established, I should now have very much to say to you. But for this the arrangement is not yet mature. Soon, however, I hope to make it so, by forwarding to you the counterpart, which is in preparation. I must, however, give you some sketch of our affairs.

At home every thing is in the main well; except as to the perverseness and capriciousness of one, and the spirit of faction of many.

Our measures from the first cause are too much the effect of momentary impulse. Vanity and jealousy exclude all counsel. Passion wrests the helm from reason.

The irreparable loss of an inestimable man removes a control which was felt, and was very salutary.

The leading friends of the government are in a sad dilemma. Shall they risk a serious schism by an attempt to change? Or shall they annihilate themselves and hazard their cause by continuing to uphold those who suspect or hate them, and who are likely to pursue a course for no better reason than because it is contrary to that which they approve?

The spirit of faction is abated nowhere. In Virginia it is more violent than ever. It seems demonstrated that the leaders there, who possess completely all the powers of the local government, are resolved to possess those of the national, by the most dangerous combinations; and, if they cannot effect this, to resort to the employment of physical force. The want of disposition in the people to second

them will be the only preventive. It is believed that it will be an effectual one.

In the two houses of Congress we have a decided majority. But the dread of unpopularity is likely to paralyze it, and to prevent the erection of additional buttresses to the Constitution, a fabric which can hardly be stationary, and which will retrograde if it cannot be made to advance.

In the mass of the people the dispositions are not bad. An attachment to the system of peace continues. No project contrary to it could easily conciliate favor. Good-will towards the government, in my opinion, predominates; though a numerous party is still actuated by an opposite sentiment, and some vague discontents have a more diffused influence. Sympathy with the French Revolution acts in a much narrower circle than formerly, but the jealousy of monarchy, which is as actual as ever, still furnishes a handle by which the factions mislead well-meaning persons.

In our councils there is no fixed plan. Some are for preserving and invigorating the navy and destroying the army. Some among the friends of government for diminishing both on pecuniary considerations.

My plan is to complete the navy to the contemplated extent: say, six ships of the line, twelve frigates, and twenty-four sloops of war; to make no alteration for the present as to the military force; and, finally, to preserve the organs of the existing force, reducing the men to a very moderate number. For this plan there are various reasons that appear to me solid. I must doubt, however, that it will finally prevail.

The recent depredations of British cruisers, sanctioned in various instances by the courts, have rekindled in many hearts an animosity which was fast being extinguished. Such persons think they see in this circumstance a new proof that friendship towards this country on the part of Great Britain will always be measured by the scale of her success. A very perplexing conflict of sensations is the result of this impression.

I must hasten to a conclusion. It was unnecessary for me to have told you that for the loss of our illustrious friend every heart is in mourning. Adieu.

Who is to be Commander-in-Chief?

Not the next in command. The appointment will probably be deferred.

TO MRS. MARTHA WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, Jan. 12, 1800.

I did not think it proper, madam, to intrude amidst the first effusions of your grief; but I can no longer restrain my sensibility from conveying to you an imperfect expression of my affectionate sympathy in the sorrows you experience. No one better than myself knows the greatness of your loss, or how much your excellent heart is formed to feel it in all its extent. Satisfied that you cannot receive consolation, I will attempt to offer none. Resignation to the will of Heaven, which the practice of your life insures, can alone alleviate the sufferings of so heartrending an affliction.

There can be few who equally with me participate in the loss you deplore. In expressing this sentiment, I may, without impropriety, allude to the numerous and distinguished marks of confidence and friendship of which you have yourself been a witness, but I cannot say in how many ways the continuance of that confidence and friendship was necessary to me in future relations. Vain, however, are regrets. From a calamity which is common to a mourning nation, who can expect to be exempt? Perhaps it is even a privilege to have a claim to a larger portion of it than others.

I will only add, madam, that I shall esteem it a real and a great happiness if any future occurrence shall enable me to give you proof of that respectful and cordial attachment with which, etc.

TO CAPTAIN GEORGE IZARD.*

NEW YORK, Feb. 27, 1800.

SIR:

Your letter of the 25th instant was received yesterday. I should certainly regret any occurrence which might deprive me of your services, unless being one which was likely to redound to your own honor and advantage.

It is very certain that the military career in this country offers too few inducements, and it is equally certain that my *present* station in the army *cannot* very long continue under the plan which seems to govern. With these impressions it would consist with a candid and friendly part towards you to discourage your acceptance of the invitation you mention. You are doubtless aware of the uncertainties which rest on the diplomatic state also, and after balancing well you will make your election, perfectly assured of my cordial acquiescence in either event and of my constant wishes for your success.

Major Toussard has informed me of his progress in preparing the regulations. The necessity of your further attention to this object has ceased.†

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, Feb. 27, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

When will Congress probably adjourn? Will any thing be settled as to a certain *election?* Will my presence be requisite as to this or any other purpose, and when?

I observe more and more that by the jealousy and envy of some, the miserliness of others, and the concurring influ-

* Son of Ralph Izard, delegate and senator from South Carolina. He was at this time Hamilton's aid, and remained in the army until 1803, when he resigned. He re-entered the army in 1812, and at the close of the war was a major-general, when he again resigned from the army, and was appointed governor of the Territory of Arkansas, a post he held until his death in 1825.

† Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

ence of *all foreign powers*, America, if she attains to greatness, must *creep* to it. Will it be so? Slow and sure is no bad maxim. Snails are a wise generation.

P. S.—Unless for indispensable reasons, I had rather not come.

TO HENRY LEE.

NEW YORK, March 7, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

The letters to which you allude in yours of the 5th instant have never been seen by me. The truth is, that I pay very little attention to such newspaper ebullitions, unless some friend points out a particular case which may demand attention.

But be assured once for all, that it is not easy for these miscreants to impair the confidence in and friendship for you, which are long habits of my mind; so that you may join me in looking with indifference upon their malicious efforts.

You have mistaken a little an observation in my last. Believe me, that I feel no despondency of any sort. As to the country, it is too young and vigorous to be quacked out of its political health; and as to myself, I feel that I stand on ground which, sooner or later, will insure me a triumph over all my enemies.

But in the meantime I am not wholly insensible of the injustice which I from time to time experience, and of which, in my opinion, I am at this moment the victim.

Perhaps my sensibility is the effect of an exaggerated estimate of my services to the United States; but on such a subject a man will judge for himself; and if he is misled by his vanity, he must be content with the mortifications to which it exposes him. In no event, however, will any di pleasure I may feel be at war with the public interest. Th in my eyes is sacred. Adieu.

TO WILLIAM SMITH.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, March 11, 1800.

You will probably have heard, before this reaches you, that I had appointed Captain Izard one of my aids. I part with him to you with all the reluctance that a strong impression of his merit can inspire. Yet I do not resist his going, because our military prospects in general, and mine in particular, are very uncertain.

Though we have had no communication since your departure, you may be assured that I have not ceased to interest myself in your welfare. If you go to Constantinople, I wish you good luck. It is, perhaps, past the time for you to play the false *Ibrahim*. You see I am in a humor to laugh. What can we do better in *this best of all possible worlds?* Should you even be shut up in the seven towers, or get the plague, if you are a true philosopher you will consider this only as laughing matter. Adieu.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

SIR: NEW YORK, March 12, 1800.

I have written to you heretofore respecting Mr. Benjamin Wells, who acted as an excise officer in the western part of Pennsylvania at the time of the disturbances there. But this gentleman has just arrived here, and requests me to mention his case again to you. I comply with his request.

It appeared from what I saw and heard at the time, that Mr. Wells distinguished himself by persevering exertion to carry the laws into effect. He was, of course, marked out as an object of vengeance. The losses which he sustained were very considerable, and proceeded from the zeal he had displayed in support of the government. To repair his losses and reward his zeal, is therefore a duty imposed on the government by the principles both of justice and policy. It is imposed by justice—for the injuries were committed by persons in disguise, or under circumstances which render it impossible to discover the offenders. It is vain, therefore,

to refer Mr. Wells to the individuals by whose acts he suffered. This is to tell him that his losses will never be repaired.

Policy speaks in this case the same language with justice. Mr. Wells suffered in consequence of his efforts to support the government, and of his attention to duty. Will the government then refuse to make him compensation? To do so, will be to violate the plainest maxims of policy, as it will effectually damp the zeal of public officers in every future case of difficulty. It is not to be expected that individuals will expose their persons to violence, and their property to destruction, in support of a government that has not generosity sufficient to reward those who suffer in its cause.

There appears to me to be no doubt of the meritorious exertions of Mr. Wells. Even if there were some doubt, yet the excellent effect which the measure is calculated to produce on public officers, will prove a full compensation for the money that may be advanced. I recollect to have mentioned to Mr. Wells, and other persons in the same capacity, that I considered the government as bound to indemnify them. So far, therefore, as my opinion could pledge the government, it was pledged. In giving this opinion I thought I was promoting the best interests of the nation, and it appears to me that the government will very widely mistake its policy in refusing to allow these men all reasonable claims.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, March 15, 1800.

The bearer of this, Mr. DuPont, formerly consul at Charleston, is personally known to you. He comes with the rest of his family to establish themselves in the United States. They are desirious of being favorably viewed by our government, and my intervention for this purpose has been requested.

Inclosed is a letter from General Pinckney, which speaks for itself. All that has come to my knowledge of this particular gentleman is recommendatory of him, as far as situ-

ation has permitted. I have always understood that his sentiments towards this country have been amicable, and that he has not been very deeply tinctured with the revolutionary spirit of his own, though circumstances have placed him in office under the new government. And I believe, if ever diseased, he is now perfectly cured. He is afraid that some expressions respecting the influence of the British Government in this country may have given an ill impression. He explains by saying, first, that they are qualified; second, that they were a necessary concession to the prejudices of the persons to whom his observations were addressed, calculated to procure attention to the conciliatory plan which he recommended, by screening him from the suspicion of being a corrupted partisan of this country. This solution seems to me an admissible one. In addressing enthusiasts, it is commonly requisite to adopt a little of their nonsense.

He has delivered me a paper which he sent to the *Aurora* to be published, but which he said was suppressed, and some thing of an insidious complexion substituted. He delivers the true communication, that it may be seen what he really did.

I am much mistaken if his father be not really a benevolent, well-disposed man. Indeed, the family generally impress us here agreeably, and we are inclined to augur well of them.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, April 7, 1800.

I thank you for the disposition shown to accommodate Mr. Robertson. When I saw him some days ago, he hoped that the matter would be placed upon the footing which was indicated.

I would readily comply with the wish of Mr. Evans, was I sure that it would not be a breach of propriety towards Mr. Madison. But if my memory does not deceive me, there

* Now first printed from the Pickering papers in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

was a sort of understanding between us that there should be no disclosure but by mutual consent. You will be sensible that I ought to be peculiarly circumspect with regard to this gentleman.*

TO GENERAL CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY.

(*Private.*)

NEW YORK, April 10, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I am perfectly content with the delay of communication to the Rev. Mr. Hill until the effect of your experiments with the Secretary of War shall be known.

I have heard nothing as to the impression made by our mission to France upon the combined powers, but I cannot doubt that it is a disagreeable one, and certainly the course of events lately has not said much for the good policy of the measure. This calculation of the President on a general peace as the main argument for what was done, proves at least to be as fallacious as I ventured to predict to him just after he had resolved to consummate the error. Captain Izard has accepted his appointment under Mr. Smith, and has sailed for Europe.

Mrs. H. and myself have learned with great pleasure the amendment of Mrs. P.'s health. Offer her and accept yourself our felicitations and best wishes.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

April 25, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I send you the paragraph of a newspaper just published. I hope it is an electioneering lie; but as it is likely to do mischief, I will thank you, by return of post, to inform me

* Now first printed from the Wolcott papers in the possession of the Connecticut Historical Society. Mr. Evans' question must have referred, I think, to the authorship of the *Federalist*, and one cannot help contrasting Hamilton's nice sense of honor, as shown here, with the course of Monroe in the Reynolds case. With Hamilton his differences with Madison only served to make him more circumspect.

whether you have any thing to confirm or refute, and particularly whether you have heard of the list with which Commodore Truxtun's * name is connected.

(*Copy of enclosed paragraph.*)

NEW HAVEN, April 15th.

Captain James Stewart, of Chatham, in the brig Sally, arrived at New London on the 4th instant, from Jamaica, brings the most unpleasant accounts from that quarter. He states that the British capture all American vessels that afford the slightest pretext for condemnation, and impress all their seamen without discrimination. Captain Stewart was taken by his majesty's ship Acasto, of forty-four guns, the commander of which, Edward Fellows, came on board the Sally himself, ordered Captain Stewart's chest open, and, with his own hands, took out 4250 dollars, besides plundering the captain of other articles.

On the arrival of the brig at Kingston, every man on board except the captain and boy, all natives of Connecticut, were impressed, and are left there. Captain Nathan Allyn, of Groton, had all his people impressed, with their protections in their hands. Captain Waterman, of New York, was treated in the same manner, with many others. And Mr. Savage, the American agent in Kingston, informed Captain Stewart that he had forwarded to the Secretary of State, by Commodore Truxtun, an attested list of the names of one thousand and one *bona fide* American seamen who have lately been impressed by the British in that single port. American vessels and cargoes were constantly condemned in that place, a full account of which must soon be made public. Several masters and supercargoes of condemned vessels came home with Captain Stewart, who, besides the general usage, was himself treated with personal incivilities and contempt.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

DEAR SIR: May 4, 1800.

You have heard of the loss of our election in the city of New York. This renders it too probable that the electors of President for this State will be anti-federal. If so, the

* Thomas Truxtun, the first of our naval officers to win distinction. He had been Captain of the Constellation, and in that frigate captured the French frigate L'Insurgente, Feb. 9, 1799. A year later he overcame another—La Vengeance, but she escaped by an accident to one of the masts of Truxtun's ship. In 1802, he was given the command of the Tripoli expedition, but refusing to go because the department would not allow him a captain as usual for his flag-ship, Jefferson dismissed him from the service. It is needless to add that he had always been a strong Federalist.

policy which I was desirous of pursuing at the last election is now recommended by motives of additional cogency.

To support *Adams* and *Pinckney* equally is the only thing that can possibly save us from the fangs of *Jefferson.*

It is, therefore, essential that the Federalists should not separate without coming to a distinct and solemn concert to pursue this course *bona fide.*

Pray attend to this, and let me speedily hear from you that it is done.

TO JOHN JAY.

DEAR SIR: NEW YORK, May 7, 1800.

You have been informed of the loss of our election in this city. It is also known that we have been unfortunate throughout Long Island and in Westchester. According to the returns hitherto, it is too probable that we lose our senators for this district.

The moral certainty therefore is, that there will be an anti-federal majority in the ensuing Legislature; and the very high probability is that this will bring *Jefferson* into the chief magistracy, unless it be prevented by the measure which I shall now submit to your consideration, namely, the immediate calling together of the existing Legislature.

I am aware that there are weighty objections to the measure, but the reasons for it appear to me to outweigh the objections; and in times like these in which we live, it will not do to be over-scrupulous. *It is easy to sacrifice the substantial interests of society by a strict adherence to ordinary rules.*

In observing this, I shall not be supposed to mean that any thing ought to be done which integrity will forbid, but merely that the scruples of delicacy and propriety, as relative to a common course of things, ought to yield to the extraordinary nature of the crisis. They ought not to hinder the taking of a *legal* and *constitutional* step to prevent an atheist in religion, and a fanatic in politics, from getting possession of the helm of state.

You, sir, know in a great degree the anti-federal party; but I fear you do not know them as well as I do. It is a composition, indeed, of very incongruous materials; but all tending to mischief—some of them, to the OVERTHROW of the GOVERNMENT, by stripping it of its due energies; others of them, to a REVOLUTION, after the manner of BONAPARTE. I speak from indubitable facts, not from conjectures and inferences. In proportion as the true character of the party is understood, is the force of the considerations which urge to every effort to disappoint it; and it seems to me, that there is a very solemn obligation to employ the means in our power.

The calling of the Legislature will have for its object the *choosing of electors by the people in districts;* this (as Pennsylvania will do nothing) will insure a majority of votes in the United States for a federal candidate. The measure will not fail to be approved by all the federal party; while it will, no doubt, be condemned by the opposite. As to its intrinsic nature, it is justified by unequivocal reasons of PUBLIC SAFETY.

The reasonable part of the world will, I believe, approve it. They will see it as a proceeding out of the common course, but warranted by the particular nature of the crisis, and the great cause of social order.

If done, the motive ought to be frankly avowed. In your communication to the Legislature they ought to be told that temporary circumstances had rendered it probable that, without their interposition, the executive authority of the general government would be transferred to hands hostile to the system heretofore pursued with so much success, and dangerous to the peace, happiness, and order of the country; that under this impression, from facts convincing to your own mind, you had thought it your duty to give the existing Legislature an opportunity for deliberating whether it would not be proper to interpose, and endeavor to prevent so great an evil by referring the choice of electors to the people distributed into districts.

In weighing this suggestion you will doubtless bear in mind that popular governments must certainly be overturned, and, while they endure, prove engines of mischief, if one party will call to its aid all the resources which vice can give, and if the other (however pressing the emergency) confines itself within all the ordinary forms of delicacy and decorum.

The Legislature can be brought together in three weeks, so that there will be full time for the object; but none ought to be lost.

Think well, my dear sir, of this proposition—appreciate the extreme danger of the crisis; and I am unusually mistaken in my view of the matter, if you do not see it right and expedient to adopt the measure.*

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, May 8, 1800.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your letter of the 5th instant, which was received yesterday. The measure you mention has been attempted, but without much hope of success.

Yet our friends are to-day in good spirits. The accounts from the northward, apparently authentic, give us the strong hope of still having a majority in our Legislature. But, be this as it may, our welfare depends absolutely on a faithful adherence to the plan which has been adopted. New York, if federal, will not go for Mr. Adams unless there shall be as firm a pledge as the nature of the thing will admit, that Mr. Pinckney will be equally supported in the Northern States.

* The proposition in this letter was one entirely unworthy of Hamilton. It was due to his anger and disgust at the result of the election in New York. Jay endorsed the letter "Proposing a measure for party purposes which it would not become me to adopt."

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, May 10, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I am very sorry for the information contained in your letter of the 7th. But I am not intimate enough with Dexter to put myself upon paper to him.

If on his return I can catch him at New York I shall have a particular conversation with him.

He is, I am persuaded, much mistaken as to the opinion entertained of Mr. Adams by the federal party. Were I to determine from my own observation, I should say *most* of the most *influential men* of that party consider him as a very *unfit* and *incapable* character.

For my individual part my mind is made up. I will never more be responsible for him by my direct support, even though the consequence should be the election of *Jefferson.*

If we must have an *enemy* at the head of the government, let it be one whom we can oppose, and for whom we are not responsible, who will not involve our party in the disgrace of his foolish and bad measures. Under *Adams*, as under *Jefferson*, the government will sink. The party in the hands of whose chief it shall sink will sink with it, and the advantage will all be on the side of his adversaries.

'T is a notable expedient for keeping the federal party together, to have at the head of it a man who hates and is despised by those men of it who, in time past, have been its most efficient supporters. If the cause is to be sacrificed to a weak and perverse man, I withdraw from the party and act upon my own ground—never certainly against my principles, but in pursuance of them in my own way. I am mistaken if others do not do the same.

The only way to prevent a fatal schism in the federal party is to support General Pinckney in good earnest.

If I can be perfectly satisfied that Adams and Pinckney will be upheld in the East with entire good faith, on the

ground of conformity, I will, wherever my influence may extend, pursue the same plan.

If not, I will pursue Mr. Pinckney as my single object. Adieu.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

May 14, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

I perceive that you as well as McHenry are quitting the administration. I am not informed how all this has been, though I conjecture. Allow me to suggest that you ought to take with you copies and extracts of all such documents as will enable you to explain both *Jefferson* and *Adams*. You are aware of a very curious journal of the latter when he was in Europe—a tissue of weakness and vanity.

The time is coming when men of real integrity and energy must write against all empirics.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, July 1, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I send you the enclosed; if any good use can be made of it, you will do it. I have been in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. There is little doubt of federal electors in all, but there is considerable doubt of a perfect union in favor of Pinckney.

The leaders of the first class are generally right, but those of the second class are too much disposed to be wrong. It is essential to inform the most discreet of this description of the facts which denote unfitness in Mr. Adams. I have promised confidential friends a correct statement. To be able to give it, I must derive aid from you, and any thing you may write shall, if you please, be returned to you. But you must be exact, and much in detail. The history of the mission to France, from the first

* Now first printed from the Pickering papers in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

steps connected with the *declarations in the speech to Congress* down to the last proceeding, is very important.

I have serious thoughts of writing to the *President*, to tell him that I have heard of his having repeatedly mentioned the existence of a British faction in this country, and alluded to me as one of that faction, requesting that he will inform me of the truth of this information, and, if true, what have been the grounds of the suggestion. His friends are industrious in propagating the idea, to defeat the efforts to unite for Pinckney. The inquiry I propose may furnish an antidote and vindicate character. What think you of this idea? For my part, I can set malice at defiance.

TO CHARLES CARROLL.*

NEW YORK, July 1, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I yesterday returned from an excursion through three of the four Eastern States, and found your letter of the 18th of April. It is very necessary that the true and independent friends of the government should communicate and understand each other at the present very embarrassed and dangerous crisis of public affairs. I am glad, therefore, of the opportunity which your letter affords me of giving you some explanations which may be useful. They are given without reserve, because the times forbid temporizing, and I hold no opinions which I have any motives to dissemble. As to the situation of this State with regard to the election of President, it is perfectly ascertained that, on a joint ballot of the two houses of our Legislature, the opposers of the government will have a majority of more than twenty, a majority which can by no means be overcome. Consequently all our electors will vote for Mr. Jefferson and Mr.

* Charles Carroll, of Maryland, who lived to be the last survivor of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Among the Hamilton papers in the State Department is a draft of this letter addressed to Jonathan R. Wilmer, also of Maryland.

Burr. I think there is little cause to doubt that the electors in the four Eastern States will all be federal.

The only question seems to be as to Rhode Island, where there is some division, and a state of things rather loose. Governor Fenner, as far as he may dare, will promote the interest of Jefferson.

A considerable diversion in favor of the opposition has lately been made in New Jersey, but the best and best-informed men there entertain no doubt that all her electors will still be federal, and I believe this opinion may be relied upon.

I go no further south, as I take it for granted your means of calculation with regard to that quarter are at least equal to mine.

The result of a comprehensive view of the subject seems to me to be that the event is uncertain, but that the probability is that a universal adherence of the Federalists to Pinckney will exclude Jefferson.

On this point there is some danger, though the greatest number of strong-minded men in New England are not only satisfied of the expediency of supporting *Pinckney* as giving the best chance against Jefferson, but even prefer him to *Adams;* yet, in the body of that people there is a strong personal attachment to this gentleman, and most of the leaders of the second class are so anxious for his re-election that it will be difficult to convince them that there is as much danger of its failure as there unquestionably is, or to induce them faithfully to co-operate in Mr. Pinckney, notwithstanding their common and strong dread of Jefferson.

It may become advisable, in order to oppose their fears to their *prejudices*, for the middle States to declare that Mr. Adams will not be supported at all, when, seeing his success desperate, they would be driven to adhere to *Pinckney*. In this plan New Jersey, and even Connecticut may be brought to concur. For both these States have generally lost confidence in Mr. Adams.

But this will be best decided by future events and eluci-

dations. In the meantime, it is not advisable that Maryland should be too deeply pledged to the support of Mr. Adams.

That this gentleman ought not to be the object of the federal wish is, with me, reduced to demonstration. His administration has already very materially disgraced and sunk the government. There are defects in his character which must inevitably continue to do this more and more. And if he is supported by the federal party, his party must, in the issue, fall with him. Every other calculation will, in my judgment, prove illusory.

Doctor *Franklin*, a sagacious observer of human nature, drew this portrait of Mr. Adams: "He is always honest, *sometimes* great, but *often mad*." I subscribe to the justness of this picture, adding, as to the first trait of it, this qualification: "as far as a man excessively *vain* and *jealous* and *ignobly* attached *to place* can be."

TO SAMUEL DEXTER.*

NEW YORK, July 9, 1800.

SIR:

From a letter (not, however, couched in very explicit terms) which I have received from Mr. Bureaux de Pusy,† I am induced to think that this gentleman would be willing to accept an appointment in the service of the United States.

He was, under the royal government, an engineer of distinction in the service of France. You are, I dare say, informed of his political history. He was a member and once president of the constituent assembly. Attached warmly to Lafayette and involved in his fortunes, he withdrew with

* Samuel Dexter, the eminent lawyer of Massachusetts, at this time Secretary of War.

† Jean Xavier Bureaux de Pusy was, as here said, a distinguished French officer and friend of Lafayette, whose imprisonment he shared at Olmutz. He came to this country in 1797, but returned after the 18th Brumaire, and filled in succession three important prefectures under Napoleon.

him and was his fellow prisoner with the Russians and Austrians. Tired of the tempest of Europe himself, with his father-in-law DuPont de Nemours,* and the whole connection have removed to this country and made a little establishment in Bergen County, New Jersey.

His professional pretensions admit of no dispute. His private character is amiable; his intelligence and information are highly respectable.

After mature reflection I am well satisfied that it is advisable for the United States to engage him if they can. He may be one of the two engineers whom the President is empowered to employ with the grade of colonel and such emoluments as he may think proper to agree for.

As the grade is rather below the pretensions of Mr. de Pusy, he may expect an increase of emoluments, which indeed is agreeable to the spirit of the provision made for this object.

There is a little probability of finding a person better qualified than in all probability is this gentleman.

The institution of a military academy being an object of primary importance, will, I doubt not, be zealously pursued. Whenever it shall take place, Mr. de Pusy will be a most desirable character to be at the head of it.†

TO JOHN ADAMS.

NEW YORK, Aug. 1, 1800.

SIR:

It has been repeatedly mentioned to me that you have on different occasions asserted the existence of a British faction in this country, embracing a number of leading or influential characters of the federal party, as usually de-

* Pierre Samuel DuPont de Nemours, an eminent French economist and statesman. He took an active part in the revolution, sustaining the moderate party, was thrown into prison, and narrowly escaped transportation. He came to this country in 1797, returned in 1802, but declined office under Napoleon, and in 1815 came back to the United States, where he died two years later.

† Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

nominated; and that you have sometimes named me, at others plainly alluded to me, as one of this description of persons. And I have likewise been assured that of late some of your warm adherents, for electioneering purposes, have employed a corresponding language. I must, sir, take it for granted that you cannot have made such assertions or insinuations without being willing to avow them, and to assign the reasons to a party who may conceive himself injured by them. I therefore trust that you will not deem it improper, that I apply directly to yourself, to ascertain from you, in reference to your own declarations, whether the information I have received is correct or not, and if correct, what are the grounds upon which you have founded the suggestion.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Aug. 3, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I have, two days since, written to Mr. Adams a *respectful* letter on the subject I heretofore mentioned to you. Occupation at court prevented its being done sooner.

But I wait with impatience for the statement of facts which you promised me. It is plain that, unless we give our reasons in some form or other, Mr. Adams' personal friends, seconded by the Jacobins, will completely *run us down in the public opinion.* Your name, in company with mine, that of T. Pickering etc., is in full circulation, as one of the *British faction* of which Mr. Adams has talked so much.

I have serious thoughts of giving to the public my opinion respecting Mr. Adams, with my reasons, in a letter to a friend, with my signature. This seems to me the most authentic way of conveying the information, and best suited to the plain dealing of my character. There are, however, reasons against it; and a very strong one is, that some of the principal causes of my disapprobation proceed from yourself, and other members of the administration, who would

be understood to be the sources of my information, whatever cover I might give the thing.

What say you to this measure? I could predicate it on the fact that I am abused by the friends of Mr. Adams, who ascribe my opposition to pique and disappointment; and could give it the shape of a *defence of myself.*

You have doubtless seen the *Aurora* publication of treasury documents, and the manner in which my name is connected with it. These publications do harm with the ignorant, who are the greatest number. I have thoughts of insinuating an action of slander, to be tried by a struck jury, against the editor. If I do it, I should claim you and the supervisors, collectors, and loan officers of all the States, from Maryland to New York, inclusively, as witnesses, to demonstrate completely the malice and falsity of the accusation. What think you of this? You see I am in a very belligerent humor.

But I remember that, at the outset, before the sums payable for interest, pensions, etc., were ascertained, I placed the money in the hands of the paying officers, upon estimate, and that, to avoid disappointment, I made the estimates large. Pray look into this, and see how far it may give any color to the calumny.

Let me hear from you soon.

TO JAMES ASHTON BAYARD.*

NEW YORK, Aug. 6, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

The president of Columbia College, in this city, has resigned, and we are looking out for a successor. Dr. Wharton has occurred to me as a character worthy of inquiry; and the great confidence I feel in your judgment and candor, induces me to have recourse to you.

* At this time member of Congress, from Delaware; afterwards for many years senator from that State. He was one of the peace commissioners at Ghent, and died soon after his return, in August, 1815.

We are extremely anxious to have a well-qualified man, as this is the only thing wanted to render our institution very flourishing. We have two very good professors—one of the languages, the other of the mathematics and natural philosophy; and we have a professor of chemistry—this branch having been lately made a part of the academic course,—together with better funds, as I believe, than any similar institution in the United States. I mention these particulars to impress you with the importance of our college to the cause of literature, and with the duty which thence results of peculiar circumspection and care in the choice of a president. It is essential that he be a gentleman in his manners, as well as a sound and polite scholar; that his moral character be irreproachable; that he possess energy of body and mind, and be of a disposition to maintain discipline without *undue austerity;* and, in the last place, that his politics be of the right sort. I beg you to inform me particularly how far Dr. Wharton meets this description, in what, if any thing, he fails. You will, of course, see the propriety of mentioning nothing about this inquiry.

In the present eventful crisis of our affairs, a mutual communication of informations and opinions among influential men of the federal party, may be attended with some advantage to their cause. Under this impression I shall give you a summary of the state of things north of the Delaware; south of it, your information is likely to be as good as mine; and, accordingly, I shall request your view of what is to be expected from that quarter. In New Hampshire there is no doubt of federal electors; but there is a decided partiality for Mr. Adams. I took pains to possess Governor Gilman, whose influence is very preponderating, of the errors and defects of Mr. Adams, and of the danger that no candidate can prevail, by mere federal strength; consequently of the expediency and necessity of unanimously voting for General Pinckney (who, in the South, may get some anti-federal votes) as the best chance of excluding Mr. Jefferson. The Governor appeared convinced of the soundness of these views, and cau-

tiously gave me to expect his co-operation. Yet I do not count upon New Hampshire for more than two things: one, a unanimous vote for Mr. Adams; the other, no vote for any Anti-federalist. In Massachusetts, almost all the leaders of the first class are dissatisfied with Mr. Adams; and enter heartily into the policy of supporting General Pinckney. But most of the leaders of the second class are attached to Mr. Adams, and fearful of jeopardizing his election by promoting that of General Pinckney; and the mass of the people are well affected to him and to his administration. Yet I have strong hopes that, by the exertions of the principal Federalists, Massachusetts will unanimously vote for Adams and Pinckney. Rhode Island is in a state somewhat uncertain. Schisms have grown up from personal rivalships, which have been improved by the Anti-federalists, to strengthen their interests. Governor Fenner expresses a hope that there will be two anti-federal electors; but our friends reject this idea as wholly improbable. But I am not quite convinced that they know the ground. In every event, however, I expect that Mr. Adams will have there an unanimous vote.

I think nothing can be relied upon as to General Pinckney. Connecticut will, I doubt not, unanimously vote for General Pinckney, but, being very much displeased with Mr. Adams, it will require the explicit advice of certain gentlemen to induce them to vote for him. No Anti-federalist has any chance there. About Vermont I am not as yet accurately informed, but I believe *Adams* and *Pinckney* will both have all the votes. In New York, all the votes will certainly be for Jefferson and Burr. New Jersey does not stand as well as she used to do. The Antis hope for the votes of this State, but I think they will be disappointed. If the electors are federal, Pinckney will certainly be voted for, and Adams will be, or not, as leading friends shall advise. Adding to this view of the Northern what I have understood of the Southern quarter, our prospects are not brilliant. There seems to be too much proba-

bility that Jefferson or Burr will be President. The latter is intriguing with all his might in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont, and there is a possibility of some success in his intrigues. He counts positively on the universal support of the Anti-federalists, and that, by some adventitious aid from other quarters, he will overtop his friend Jefferson. Admitting the first point, the conclusion may be realized; and if it is so, Burr will certainly attempt to reform the government *à la Bonaparte*. He is as unprincipled and dangerous a man as any country can boast—as true a Catiline as ever met in midnight conclave.

TO JAMES McHENRY.

NEW YORK, Aug. 27, 1800.

Indeed, my dear Mac., I have not enough the gift of second sight to foresee what New England will do.

The mass of the peope there are attached to Adams and the leaders of the second class pretty generally. The leaders of the first class pretty generally promote the joint support of *Adams* and Pinckney, either because they dislike Adams, or hate or fear Jefferson.

Upon the whole, I believe, though not with perfect assurance, that Pinckney will have almost all the votes of New England. Adams will have all.

The State of New Jersey is more uncertain than I could wish. Parties will be too nicely balanced there. But our friends continue confident of a favorable result. If the electors in this State are federal, they will certainly vote for Pinckney, and I rather think will do, with respect to Mr. Adams, what may be thought right.

In New York, there is no chance for any *federal candidate*.

I think, at all events, Maryland had better choose by the Legislature. If we have a majority of federal votes throughout, we can certainly exclude Jefferson, and, if we please, bring the question between Adams and Pinckney to the House of Representatives.

We fight Adams on very unequal grounds, because we do not declare the motives of our dislike. The exposition of these is very important—but how? I would make it and put my name to it, but I cannot do it without its being conclusively inferred that as to very material facts I must have derived my information from members of the administration. Yet, without this, we have the air of mere *caballers*, and shall be completely run down in the public opinion.

I have written a letter, of which I shall send a copy to you, another to Wolcott. If I am not forbidden, Colonel Ogden, to whom it will be addressed, will commit it to the newspapers.

P. S.—I have concluded to send the enclosed to you instead of Major Jackson.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Sept. 26, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

As I hinted to you some time since, I have drafted a letter which it is my wish to send to influential individuals in the New England States. I hope from it two advantages—the promoting of Mr. Pinckney's election and the vindication of ourselves.

You may depend upon it, a very serious impression has been made on the public mind, by the partisans of Mr. Adams, to our disadvantage; that the facts hitherto known have very partially impaired the confidence of the body of the Federalists in Mr. Adams, who, for want of information, are disposed to regard his opponents as factious men. If this cannot be counteracted, our characters are the sacrifice. To do it, facts must be stated with some authentic stamp. Decorum may not permit going into the newspapers, but the letter may be addressed to so many respect-

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

able men of influence as may give its contents general circulation.

What say you to the measure? Anonymous publications can now effect nothing.

Some of the most delicate of the facts stated I hold from the three ministers, yourself particularly, and I do not think myself at liberty to take the step without your consent. I never mean to bring proof, but to stand upon the credit of my own veracity.

Say quickly what is to be done, for there is no time to spare. Give me your opinion not only of the measure, but of the *fashion* and *spirit* of the letter in regard to utility and propriety. If there are exceptionable ideas or phrases, note them.

As it is a first draught, there is much I should myself mend. But I have not now leisure for it previous to your inspection.*

TO JOHN ADAMS.

NEW YORK, Oct. 1, 1800.

SIR:

The time which has elapsed since my letter of the 1st Aug. was delivered to you precludes the further expectation of an answer.

From this silence I will draw no inference, nor will I presume to judge of the fitness of silence on such an occasion on the part of the chief magistrate of a republic towards a citizen who, without a stain, has discharged so many important public trusts.

But thus much I will affirm, that by whomsoever a charge of the kind mentioned in my former letter may at any time have been made or insinuated against me, it is a base, wicked, and cruel calumny, destitute even of a plausible pretext to excuse the folly or the depravity which must have dictated it.

* Reprinted from "The Administrations of Washington and Adams," ii., 421.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.

NEW YORK, Nov. 13, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

You no doubt have seen my pamphlet respecting the conduct and character of President Adams. The press teems with replies, and I may finally think it expedient to publish a second time. In this case I shall reinforce my charges by new anecdotes. My friends will, no doubt, be disposed to aid me. You probably possess some which are unknown to me. Pray let me have them without delay.

You will observe that a prejudice is attempted to be excited against you as wishing to bring about an alliance with Great Britain. Explain to me fully this affair. I remember that you once consulted me about the expediency of the measure, and that I in reply gave you my opinion. I think it was that the thing was in any event problematical —that it was not advisable to go into at the time—that the most prudent course would be for Great Britain to have a power competent to the purpose vested in her Minister in this country, and to take the matter *ad referendum* to be governed by future circumstances.

I have not a copy of my letter. You will oblige me by letting me have it.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

NEW YORK, Dec. 16, 1800.

It is now, my dear sir, ascertained that Jefferson or Burr will be President, and it seems probable that they will come with equal votes to the House of Representatives. It is also circulated here that, in this event, the Federalists in Congress, or some of them, talk of preferring Burr. I trust New England, at least, will not so far lose its head as to fall into this snare. There is no doubt but that, upon every virtuous and prudent calculation, Jefferson is to be preferred. He is by far not so dangerous a man; and he has pretensions to character.

As to *Burr*, there is nothing in his favor. His private character is not defended by his most partial friends. He is bankrupt beyond redemption, except by the plunder of his country. His public principles have no other spring or aim than his own aggrandizement, *per fas et nefas.* If he can, he will certainly disturb our institutions, to secure to himself *permanent power*, and with it *wealth.* He is truly the Catiline of America; and, if I may credit Major Wilcocks, he has held very vindictive language respecting his opponents.

But early measures must be taken to fix on this point the opinions of the Federalists. Among them, from different motives, Burr will find partisans. If the thing be neglected, he may possibly go far.

Yet it may be well enough to throw out a lure for him, in order to tempt him to start for the plate, and then lay the foundation of dissension between the two chiefs.

You may communicate this letter to *Marshall** and *Sedgwick.* Let me hear speedily from you in reply.

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

December 17, 1800.

Your last letter, my dear sir, has given me great pain, not only because it informed me that the opinion in favor of Mr. Burr was increasing among the Federalists, but because it also told me that Mr. Sedgwick was one of its partisans. I have a letter from this gentleman, in which he expresses decidedly his preference of Mr. Jefferson. I hope you have been mistaken, and that it is not possible for him to have been guilty of so great duplicity.†

There is no circumstance which has occurred in the course of our political affairs that has given me so much pain as the idea that Mr. Burr might be elevated to the Presidency by

* John Marshall, at this time Secretary of State, and afterwards Chief-Justice.

† Hamilton was right, and Wolcott mistaken; Sedgwick preferred Jefferson.

the means of the Federalists. I am of opinion that this party has hitherto solid claims of merit with the public, and so long as it does nothing to forfeit its title to confidence, I shall continue to hope that our misfortunes are temporary, and that the party will erelong emerge from its depression. But if it shall act a foolish or unworthy part in any capital instance, I shall then despair.

Such, without doubt, will be the part it will act, if it shall seriously attempt to support Mr. Burr, in opposition to Mr. Jefferson. If it fails, as, after all, is not improbable, it will have riveted the animosity of that person; will have destroyed or weakened the motives to moderation which he must at present feel, and it will expose them to the disgrace of a defeat, in an attempt to elevate to the first place of the government one of the worst men in the community.

If it succeeds, it will have done nothing more nor less than place in that station a man who will possess the boldness and daring necessary to give success to the Jacobin system, instead of one who, for want of that quality, will be less fitted to promote it.

Let it not be imagined that Mr. Burr can be won to the federal views. It is a vain hope. Stronger ties and stronger inducements than they can offer will impel him in a different direction. His ambition will not be content with those objects which virtuous men of either party will allot to it, and his situation and his habits will oblige him to have recourse to corrupt expedients, from which he will be restrained by no moral scruple. To accomplish his ends, he must lean upon unprincipled men, and will continue to adhere to the myrmidons who have hitherto seconded him. To these he will, no doubt, add able rogues of the federal party, but he will employ the rogues of all parties to overrule the good men of all parties, and to prosecute projects which wise men of every description will disapprove.

These things are to be inferred, with moral certainty, from the character of the man. Every step in his c proves that he has formed himself upon the model

line, and he is too cold-blooded and too determined a conspirator ever to change his plan.

What would you think of these toasts and this conversation at his table within the last three or four weeks?

1st. The French republic.

2d. The commissioners on both sides who negotiated the convention.

3d. Bonaparte.

4th. Lafayette.

What would you think of his having seconded the positions, that it was the interest of this country to allow the belligerent powers to bring in and sell their prizes, and build and equip ships in our ports? Do you not see in this the scheme of war with Great Britain, as the instrument of power and wealth? Can it be doubted that a man who has all his life speculated upon the popular prejudices, will consult them in the object of a war when he thinks it is expedient to make one? Can a man who, despising democracy, has chimed in with all its absurdities, be diverted from the plan of ambition which must have directed his course? They who suppose it must understand little of human nature.

If Jefferson is President, the whole responsibility of bad measures will rest with the Anti-federalists. If Burr is made so by the Federalists, the whole responsibility will rest with them. The other party will say to the people: We intended him only for Vice-President; here he might have done very well, or been at least harmless. But the Federalists, to disappoint us, and a majority of you, took advantage of a momentary superiority to put him in the first place. He is therefore their President, and they must answer for all the evils of his bad conduct. And the people will believe them.

Will any reasonable calculation on the part of the Federalists uphold the policy of assuming so great a responsibility in the support of so unpromising a character? The negative is so manifest that, had I not been assured of the contrary, I should have thought it impossible that assent to it would have been attended with a moment's hesitation.

Alas! when will men consult their reason rather than their passions? Whatever they may imagine, the desire of mortifying the adverse party must be the chief spring of the disposition to prefer Mr. Burr. This disposition reminds me of the conduct of the Dutch moneyed men, who, from their hatred of the old aristocracy, favored the admission of the French into Holland, to overturn every thing.

Adieu to the Federal Troy, if they once introduce this Grecian horse into their citadel.

Trust me, my dear friend, you cannot render a greater service to your country than to resist this project. Far better will it be to endeavor to obtain from Jefferson assurances on some cardinal points:

1st. The preservation of the actual fiscal system.

2d. Adherence to the neutral plan.

3d. The preservation and gradual increase of the navy.

4th. The continuance of our friends in the offices they fill, except in the great departments, in which he ought to be left free.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, Dec. 22, 1800.

I entirely agree with you, my dear sir, that, in the event of Jefferson and Burr coming to the House of Representatives, the former is to be preferred. The appointment of Burr as President would disgrace our country abroad. No agreement with him could be relied upon. His private circumstances render disorder a necessary resource. His public principles offer no obstacle. His ambition aims at nothing short of permanent power and wealth in his own person. For heaven's sake, let not the federal party be responsible for the elevation of this man!

The convention with France is just such an issue as was to have been expected. It plays into the hands of France, by the precedent of those principles of navigation which she is at this moment desirous of making the basis of a league

of the northern powers against England. This feature will be peculiarly disagreeable to the latter, and, as it relates to the general politics of the world, is a make-weight in the wrong scale.

The stipulation about privateers and prizes is of questionable propriety. If third powers are entitled to the benefit of annulling our treaties with France, it is a plain violation of our compact with Great Britain.

But I rather think it the better opinion that, pending the differences which produced that measure, it is a matter purely between France and ourselves, by which no third power has a right to profit, and that even the *statu quo* would not have been a violation of our engagements with Great Britain.

Thus situated, I am of opinion the treaty must be ratified. The contrary condition would, I think, utterly ruin the federal party and endanger our internal tranquillity. Moreover, it is better to close the thing where it is, than to leave it to a Jacobin to do much worse.

This is a deliberately formed sentiment, and I hope will accord with the conclusions of our friends. At the same time, I wish it to be declared by our friends in the Senate, that they think the treaty liable to strong objections and pregnant with dangers to the interests of this country, but having been negotiated, they will not withhold their assent.

Reasons should be given.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.*

NEW YORK, Dec. 24, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I will run the risk with you of giving countenance to a charge lately brought against me, though it has certainly had a very false direction. I mean that of being fond of giving advice.

Several friends at Washington inform me that there is

* At this time Senator from New York.

likely to be much hesitation in the Senate about ratifying the convention with France. I do not wonder at it, and yet I should be sorry that it should mature itself into a disagreement to the instrument. Having received its present form, I think it should be ratified.

In my opinion, there is nothing in it contrary to our treaty with Great Britain. The annulling of our former treaties with France was an act of reprisal in consequence of hostile differences, of which no other power had a right to benefit, and which, upon an accommodation, might have been rescinded, even to the restoration of the *statu quo.* Great Britain is now, in this respect, in a better situation than she was when she made the treaty. She has, so far, no good cause to complain.

There are, indeed, features which will not be pleasant to the British cabinet, particularly the principle that free ships shall make free goods, and that the flag of ships-of-war shall protect. As these are points upon which France was endeavoring to form hostile combinations against Great Britain, the giving place to them in the convention will have an unfriendly countenance towards her, and, as it regards good understanding between her and us, is to be regretted in the present moment. Yet we had a right to make these stipulations, and, as they may be fairly *supposed* to be advantageous to us, they are not in fact indications of enmity. They give no real cause of umbrage, and, considering the general interests of Great Britain and her particular situation, it does not seem probable that they will produce on her part a hostile conduct.

As to the indemnification for spoliations, that was rather to be wished than expected, while France is laying the world under contribution. The people of this country will not endure that a definitive rupture with France shall be hazarded on this ground.

If this convention is not closed, the leaving of the whole subject open will render it easier for the Jacobin administration to make a worse thing.

On the whole, the least evil is to ratify. The contrary would finish the ruin of the federal party, and endanger our internal tranquillity. It is better to risk the dangers on the other hand, than on this side.

Another subject. *Jefferson or Burr?* the former without all doubt. The latter, in my judgment, has no principle, public or private; could be bound by no agreement; will listen to no monitor but his ambition, and for this purpose will use the worst part of the community as a ladder to climb to permanent power, and an instrument to crush the better part. He is bankrupt beyond redemption, except by the resources that grow out of war and disorder, or by a sale to a foreign power, or by great peculation. War with Great Britain would be the immediate instrument. He is sanguine enough to hope every thing, daring enough to attempt every thing, wicked enough to scruple nothing. From the elevation of such a man may heaven preserve the country!

Let our situation be improved to obtain from Jefferson assurances on certain points: the maintenance of the present system, especially on the cardinal articles of public credit—a navy, neutrality. Make any discreet use you may think fit of this letter.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, Dec. 26, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

The post of yesterday gave me the pleasure of a letter from you. I thank you for the communication. I trust that a letter which I wrote you the day before the receipt of yours will have duly reached you, as it contains some very free and confidential observations ending in two results.

1st. That the convention with France ought to be ratified as the least of two evils.

2d. That *on the same ground Jefferson* ought to be preferred to *Burr*.

I trust the Federalists will not finally be so mad as to vote for the *latter*. I speak with an intimate and accurate knowledge of character. His elevation can only promote the purposes of the desperate and profligate.

If there be a man in the world I ought to hate, it is Jefferson. With Burr I have always been personally well. But the public good must be paramount to every private consideration.

My opinion may be freely used with such reserves as you shall think discreet.

TO JAMES A. BAYARD.

NEW YORK, Dec. 27, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

Several letters to myself and others from the city of Washington, excite in my mind extreme alarm on the subject of the future President. It seems nearly ascertained that Jefferson and Burr will come into the House of Representatives with equal votes, and those letters express the probability that the federal party may prefer the latter. In my opinion, a circumstance more ruinous to them, or more disastrous to the country, could not happen.

This opinion is dictated by a long and close attention to the character of B., with the best opportunities of knowing it—an advantage of judging which, few of our friends possess, and which ought to give some weight to my opinion.

Be assured, my dear sir, that this man has no principle, public nor private. As a politician, his sole spring of action is an inordinate ambition; as an individual, he is believed by friends as well as foes to be without *probity;* and a voluptuary by system—with habits of expense that can be satisfied by no fair expedients. As to his talents, great management and cunning are the predominant features; he is yet to give proofs of those solid abilities which characterize the statesman. Daring and energy must be allowed him; but these qualities, under the direction of the worst passions, are

certainly strong objections, not recommendations. He is of a temper to undertake the most hazardous enterprises, because he is sanguine enough to think nothing impracticable; and of an ambition that will be content with nothing less than *permanent* power in his own hands. The maintenance of the existing institutions will not suit him; because under them his power will be too narrow and too precarious. Yet the innovations he may attempt will not offer the substitute of a system *durable* and *safe*, calculated to give lasting prosperity, and to unite liberty with strength. It will be the system of the day, sufficient to serve his own turn, and not looking beyond himself. To execute this plan, as the good men of the country cannot be relied upon, the worst will be used. Let it not be imagined that the difficulties of execution will deter, or a calculation of interest restrain. The truth is, that under forms of government like ours, too much is practicable to men who will, without scruple, avail themselves of the bad passions of human nature. To a man of this description, possessing the requisite talents, the acquisition of permanent power is not a chimera. I *know* that Mr. Burr does not view it as such, and I am sure there are no means too atrocious to be employed by him. In debt, vastly beyond his means of payment, with all the habits of excessive expense, he cannot be satisfied with the regular emoluments of any office of our government. Corrupt expedients will be to him a *necessary* resource. Will any prudent man offer such a President to the temptations of foreign gold? No engagement that can be made with him can be depended upon; while making it, he will laugh in his sleeve at the credulity of those with whom he makes it;—and the first moment it suits his views to break it, he will do so.* Let me add, that I could scarcely name

* A recent incident will give you an idea of his views as to foreign politics. I dined with him lately. His toasts were: "The French Republic," "The Commissioners who Negotiated the Convention," "Buonaparte," "The Marquis La Fayette." His doctrines, that it would be the interest of this country to permit the indiscriminate sale of prizes by the belligerent powers; and the

a discreet man of either party in our State, who does not think Mr. Burr the most unfit man in the United States for the office of President. Disgrace abroad, ruin at home, are the probable fruits of his elevation. To contribute to the disappointment and mortification of Mr. J., would be, on my part, only to retaliate for unequivocal proofs of enmity; but in a case like this, it would be base to listen to personal considerations. In alluding to the situation, I mean only to illustrate how strong must be the motives which induce me to promote *his* elevation in exclusion of another.

For heaven's sake, my dear sir, exert yourself to the utmost to save our country from so great a calamity. Let us not be responsible for the evils, which in all probability will follow the preference. All calculations that may lead to it must prove fallacious.

TO JOHN RUTLEDGE.

December, 1800.

As long as the federal party pursue their high ground of integrity and principle, I shall not despair of the public weal; but if they quit it and descend to be willing instruments of the elevation of the most unfit and most dangerous man of the community to the highest station in the government, I shall no longer see any anchor for the hopes of good men. I shall at once anticipate all the evils that a daring and unprincipled ambition, wielding the lever of Jacobinism, can bring upon an infatuated country. 'T is not to the chapter of accidents that we ought to trust the government, peace, and happiness of our country. 'T is enough for us to know that Mr. Burr is one of the most unprincipled men in the United States, to determine us to

building and equipment of vessels—a project amounting to nothing more nor less (with the semblance of equality) than to turn all our naval resources into the channel of France, and compel Great Britain to war. Indeed, Mr. Burr must have war, as the instrument of his ambition and cupidity. The peculiarity of the occasion will excuse my mentioning in confidence the occurrences of a private table.

decline being responsible for the precarious issues of his calculations of interest. You cannot, in my opinion, render a greater service to your country than by exerting your influence to counteract the impolitic and impure idea of raising Mr. Burr to the chief magistracy.*

TO JAMES ROSS.†

1801.

Letters which myself and others have received from Washington give me much alarm at the prospect that Mr. Burr may be supported by the Federalists in preference to Mr. Jefferson. Be assured, my dear sir, that this would be a fatal mistake. From a thorough knowledge of the characters, I can pronounce with confidence that Mr. Burr is the last man in the United States to be supported by the Federalists.

First. It is an opinion firmly entertained by his enemies and not disputed by his friends, that, as a man, he is deficient in honesty. Some very sad stories are related of him. That he is bankrupt for a large deficit, is certain. Second. As a politician, discerning men of both parties admit that he has but one principle—to get power by any means, and to keep it by all means. Third. Of an ambition too irregular and inordinate to be content with institutions that leave his power precarious, he is of too bold and sanguine a temper to think any thing too hazardous to be attempted, or too difficult to be accomplished. Fourth. As to talents, they are great for management and intrigue—but he is yet to give the first proofs that they are equal to the act of governing well. Fifth. As to his theory, no man can tell what it is. Institutions that would serve his own purposes

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vii., 445. General John Rutledge, of South Carolina, to whom this letter is addressed, was the son of the revolutionary patriot and statesman of the same name. He was at this time Member of Congress from South Carolina.

† James Ross, Senator from Pennsylvania, was one of the leaders of the Federalists and a lawyer of distinguished ability.

(such as the government of France of the present day) not such as would promise lasting prosperity and glory to the country, would be his preference, because he cares only for himself, and nothing for his country or glory. Sixth. Certain that his irregular ambition cannot be supported by good men, he will court and employ the worst men of all parites as the most eligible instruments. Jacobinism in its most pernicious form will scourge the country. Seventh. As to foreign politics, war will be a necessary means of power and wealth. The animosity to the British will be the handle by which he will attempt to wield the nation to that point. Within a fortnight he has advocated positions, which, if acted upon, would in six menths place us in a state of war with that power. From the elevation of such a man may heaven preserve the country. Should it be by the means of the Federalists, I should at once despair. I should see no longer any thing upon which to rest the hope of public or private prosperity.

No. Let the Federalists vote for Jefferson.

But, as they have much in their power, let them improve the situation to obtain assurances from him:

1. The preservation of the actual system of finance and public credit.

2. The support and gradual increase of the navy.

3. A *bona fide* neutrality towards belligerent powers.

4. The preservation in office of our friends, except in the great departments, in respect to which and to future appointments he ought to be at liberty to promote his friends.*

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, Jan. 9, 1801.

I have lately, my dear sir, written you two letters. As they contained some delicate topics, I shall be glad to know that they got to hand.

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vii., 448.

It has occurred to me that perhaps the Federalists may be disposed to play the game of preventing an election, and leaving the executive power in the hands of a future President of the Senate. This, if it could succeed, would be, for obvious reasons, a most dangerous and unbecoming policy. But it is well it should be understood that it cannot succeed. The Anti-federalists, as a body, prefer Jefferson, but among them are many who will be better suited by the *dashing, projecting* spirit of *Burr*, and who, after doing what they will suppose to be *saving appearances*, they will go over to Mr. Burr. *Edward Livingston* has declared among his friends that his first ballot will be for Jefferson; his second for Burr.

The present is a crisis which demands the exertions of men who have an interest in public order.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, Jan. 10, 1801.

I thank you, my dear sir, for your letter of the 5th instant. The scruples you express about the ratification of the convention are very respectable. No well-informed man can doubt that it is an exceptionable instrument, but I continue of the opinion that it is best, upon the whole, to ratify it unconditionally.

It does not appear to me that, on fair construction, *the existence* of the old treaties is recognized, though a right of mutual indemnities as to the past is admitted. But inasmuch as it is declared that they shall hereafter have no effect until a future agreement, this appears to me to amount to the *consent* of France that they shall become inoperative and null, unless they shall be revived by the *consent* of the United States. So far I think that some thing is gained. For the right of one party to annul a treaty is a litigious right, never consummated till the other party waives its opposition. This is now in substance done by France. And, in my opinion, to have advanced so far is a matter of considerable importance.

The indemnification for spoliation is, I admit, virtually relinquished as the price of the waiver of the treaties; but considering our situation, and the immense and growing power of France, that price is not too great.

Further, there are such potent obstacles in the nature of things to the obtaining of effectual indemnification, that it is very well to leave it to the chapter of accidents.

The restoration of ships-of-war is an unpleasant, and, I do not deny, rather a humiliating thing.

But as it is in *form* reciprocal, it does not seem to me that unequivocal species of dishonor which ought to induce us to run great risks. Our conduct heretofore has gone on the ground that, though we ought not to submit to *unequivocal disgrace*, yet we ought not to be too susceptible or over-curious and nice. In this spirit we have borne a great deal, sometimes too much, from all the *belligerents*. Circumstances do not now invite to a different course. Our rapid progress to *strength* will, erelong, encourage to and warrant higher pretensions.

You seem to have gotten over the difficulty of the supposed collision between the convention and our treaty with Britain. You already know that this accords with my opinion. Yet it seems to me the most thorny point, as it draws into question our faith towards a third power.

This gotten over, there is not, in my apprehension, any remaining obstacle to a full ratification which may not be overcome.

The limitation of the treaty as to time is doubtless desirable, but we may be sure it will not be eternal in fact. Perpetual peace will not exist. A war cuts the knot, and leaves us free to renew or not, to renew absolutely, or with qualifications.

With this view of the subject, I do not consider the objections to a simple ratification to be strong enough to countervail the dangers of a qualified one, which certainly will leave it in the option of the other party to recede.

It is possible that, in the pride of success, our backward-

ness to ratify may be the pretext of a rupture to punish the presumption. Under existing circumstances, such an event would be disastrous, if not for the evils which the arms of France might inflict, yet for the hazard of internal schisms and discord. The mania for France has in a great degree revived in our country, and the party which should invite a rupture would be likely to be ruined.

Perhaps, with the administration we are going to have, there may be less danger of rupture than with one of a different cast; yet not much reliance can be placed on this circumstance, and there is another side to the question which deserves attention.

If the present convention be ratified, our relations to France will have received a precise shape. To take up the subject anew and mould it into a shape better according with Jacobin projects will not be as easy as finding the whole business open to give it that shape. I think it politic, therefore, to close as far as we can.

Again, it will be of consequence to the federal cause in future to be able to say the federal administration steered the vessel through all the storms raised by the contentions of Europe into a peaceful and safe port. This cannot be said if the contest with France continues open.

Inclosed you have some recent intelligence which seems to strengthen the argument for a simple ratification. Great Britain stands on a precipice. The misfortune for her is that there are manifest symptoms of a depreciated and depreciating paper currency. This may cut deep.

The result is that good understanding with the United States is more than ever necessary to Great Britain. She will not lightly take umbrage while France is in a position to ride a high horse. These facts cannot prudently be excluded from the calculation.

So our eastern friends want to join the armed neutrality and make war upon Britain. I infer this from their mad propensity to make *Burr* President. If Jefferson has prejudices leading to that result, he has defects of character

to keep him back. *Burr*, with the same propensities, will find the thing necessary to his projects, and will *dare* to hazard all consequences. They may as well think to bind a giant by a cobweb as his ambition by promises.

TO JAMES A. BAYARD.

NEW YORK, Jan. 16, 1801.

I was glad to find, my dear sir, by your letter that you had not yet determined to go with the current of the federal party in the support of Mr. Burr, and that you were resolved to hold yourself disengaged till the moment of final decision. Your resolution to separate yourself in this instance from the federal party, if your conviction shall be strong of the unfitness of Mr. Burr, is certainly laudable. So much does it coincide with my ideas, that if the party shall, by supporting Mr. Burr as President, adopt him for their official chief, I shall be obliged to consider myself as an *isolated* man. It will be impossible for me to reconcile with my notions of *honor* or policy the continuing to be of a party which, according to my apprehension, will have degraded itself and the country.

I am sure, nevertheless, that the motives of many will be good, and I shall never cease to esteem the individuals, though I shall deplore a step which, I fear, experience will show to be a very fatal one. Among the letters which I receive assigning the reasons *pro* and *con* for preferring Burr to J., I observe no small exaggeration to the prejudice of the latter, and some things taken for granted as to the former, which are at least questionable. Perhaps myself the first, at some expense of popularity, to unfold the true character of Jefferson, it is too late for me to become his apologist; nor can I have any disposition to do it.

I admit that his politics are tinctured with fanaticism; that he is too much in earnest in his democracy; that he has been a mischievous enemy to the principal measures of our past administration; that he is crafty and persevering in

his objects; that he is not scrupulous about the means of success, nor very mindful of truth, and that he is a contemptible hypocrite. But it is not true, as is alleged, that he is an enemy to the power of the Executive, or that he is for confounding all the powers in the House of Representatives. It is a fact which I have frequently mentioned, that, while we were in the administration together, he was generally for a large construction of the Executive authority and not backward to act upon it in cases which coincided with his views. Let it be added that in his theoretic ideas he has considered as improper the participations of the Senate in the Executive authority. I have more than once made the reflection that, viewing himself as the reversioner, he was solicitous to come into the possession of a good estate. Nor is it true that Jefferson is zealot enough to do any thing in pursuance of his principles which will contravene his popularity or his interest. He is as likely as any man I know to temporize—to calculate what will be likely to promote his own reputation and advantage; and the probable result of such a temper is the preservation of systems, though originally opposed, which, being once established, could not be overturned without danger to the person who did it. To my mind a true estimate of Mr. Jefferson's character warrants the expectation of a temporizing rather than a violent system. That Jefferson has manifested a culpable predilection for France is certainly true; but I think it a question whether it did not proceed quite as much from her *popularity* among us as from sentiment, and, in proportion as that popularity is diminished, his zeal will cool. Add to this that there is no fair reason to suppose him capable of being corrupted, which is a security that he will not go beyond certain limits. It is not at all improbable that under the change of circumstances Jefferson's Gallicism has considerably abated.

As to Burr these things are admitted, and indeed cannot be denied, that he is a man of *extreme* and *irregular* ambition; that he is *selfish* to a degree which excludes all social

affections, and that he is decidedly *profligate.* But it is said (1) that he is *artful* and *dexterous* to accomplish his ends; (2) that he holds no pernicious theories, but is a mere *matter-of-fact* man; (3) that his very selfishness* is a guard against mischievous foreign predilections; (4) that his *local situation* has enabled him to appreciate the utility of our commercial and fiscal systems, and the same quality of selfishness will lead him to support and invigorate them; (5) that he is now disliked by the Jacobins; that his elevation will be a mortal stab to them, breed an invincible hatred to him, and compel him to lean on the Federalists; (6) that Burr's ambition will be checked by his good sense, by the manifest impossibility of succeeding in any scheme of usurpation, and that, if attempted, there is nothing to fear from the attempt. These topics are, in my judgment, more plausible than solid. As to the first point, the fact must be admitted but those qualities are objections rather than recommendations, when they are under the direction of bad principles. As to the second point, too much is taken for granted. If Burr's conversation is to be credited, he is not very far from being a visionary. He has quoted to me *Connecticut* as an example of the success of the democratic theory, and as authority, I have serious doubts whether it was not a good one. It is ascertained in some instances that he has talked perfect *Godwinism.* I have myself heard him speak with applause of the French system, as unshackling the mind and leaving it to its natural energies, and I have been present when he has contended against banking systems† with earnestness and with the same arguments that Jefferson would use.

The truth is, that Burr is a man of a very subtle imagination, and a mind of this make is rarely free from ingenious whimsies. Yet I admit that he has no fixed theory, and that his peculiar notions will easily give way to his interest. But is it a recommendation to have *no theory?* Can that

* It is always very dangerous to look at the *vices* of men for *good.*

† Yet he has lately, by a trick, established a *bank*—a perfect monster in its principles, but a very convenient instrument of *profit* and *influence.*

man be a systematic or able statesman who has none? I believe not. *No general principles* will hardly work much better than erroneous ones.

As to the third point, it is certain that Burr, generally speaking, has been as warm a partisan of France as Jefferson; that he has, in some instances, shown himself to be so with passion. But if it was from calculation, who will say that his calculations will not continue him so? His selfishness,* so far from being an obstacle, may be a prompter. If corrupt as well as selfish, he may be a partisan for gain. If ambitious as well as selfish, he may be a partisan for the sake of aid to his views. No man has trafficked more than he in the floating passions of the multitude. Hatred to Great Britain and attachment to France, in the public mind, will naturally lead a man of his selfishness, attached to place and power, to favor France and oppose Great Britain. The Gallicism of many of our patriots is to be thus resolved, and, in my opinion, it is morally certain that Burr will continue to be influenced by this calculation.

As to the fourth point, the instance I have cited with respect to banks, proves that the argument is not to be relied on. If there was much in it, why does Chancellor Livingston maintain that we ought not to cultivate navigation, but ought to let foreigners be our carriers? France is of the opinion too, and Burr, for some reason or other, will be very apt to be of the opinion of France.

As to the fifth point, nothing can be more fallacious. It is demonstrated by recent facts† that Burr is *solicitous* to *keep* upon *anti-federal* ground, to avoid compromitting himself by any engagements‡ with the Federalists. With or without such engagements, he will easily persuade his former friends that he does stand on that ground, and after their first resentment they will be glad to rally under him.

* Unprincipled selfishness is more apt to seek rapid gain in disorderly practices than slow advantages from orderly systems.

† My letter to Mr. Morris states some of them.

‡ He trusts to their *prejudices* and *hopes* for support.

In the meantime he will take care not to disoblige them, and he will always court those among them who are best fitted for tools. He will never choose to lean on good men, because he knows that they will never support his bad projects; but instead of this he will endeavor to disorganize both parties, and to form out of them a third, composed of men fitted by their characters to be conspirators and instruments of such projects.

That this will be his future conduct may be inferred from his past plan, and from the admitted quality of irregular ambition. Let it be remembered that Mr. Burr has never appeared solicitous for fame, and that great ambition, unchecked by principle or the love of glory, is an unruly tyrant, which never can keep long in a course which good men will approve. As to the last point, the proposition is against the experience of all times. Ambition without principle never was long under the guidance of good sense. Besides that, really, the force of Mr. Burr's understanding is much overrated. He is far more *cunning* than *wise*, far more *dextrous* than *able*.

[*Very, very confidential.*—In my opinion he is inferior in real ability to Jefferson. There are also facts against the supposition. It is past all doubt that he has blamed me for not having improved the situation I once was in to change the government. That when answered that this could not have been done without guilt, he replied, "Les grandes âmes se soucient peu des petits moraux"; that when told the thing was never practicable from the genius and situation of the country, he answered, "That depends on the estimate we form of the human passions, and of the means of influencing them." Does this prove that Mr. Burr would consider a scheme of usurpation as visionary?]

The truth is, with great apparent coldness he is the most sanguine man in the world. He thinks every thing possible to adventure and perseverance, and, though I believe he will fail, I think it almost certain he will attempt usurpation, and the attempt will involve great mischief. But there is

one point of view which seems to me decisive. If the Anti-federalists who prevailed in the election are left to take their own man, they remain responsible, and the Federalists remain *free, united*, and without *stain*, in a situation to resist, with effect, pernicious measures. If the Federalists substitute Burr, they adopt him and become answerable for him. Whatever may be the theory of the case abroad and at *home* (for so from the beginning will be taught), Mr. Burr will become *in fact* the man of our party; and if he acts ill, we must share in the blame and disgrace. By adopting him we do all we can to reconcile the minds of the Federalists to him, and we prepare them for the effectual operation of his arts. He will doubtless gain many of them, and the Federalists will become a disorganized and contemptible party. Can there be any serious question between the policy of leaving the Anti-federalists to be answerable for the elevation of an exceptionable man, and that of adopting ourselves and becoming answerable for a man who, on all hands, is acknowledged to be a complete Catiline? 'T is enough to state the question to indicate the answer, if reason, not passion, presides in the decision.

You may communicate this, and my former letter, to discreet and confidential friends.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, January, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

I hasten to give you some information which may be useful. I know as a fact that overtures have been made by leading individuals of the federal party to Mr. Burr, who declines to give any assurances respecting his future intentions and conduct, saying that to do it might injure him with his friends, and prevent their co-operation; that all ought to be inferred from the necessity of his future situation, as it regarded the disappointment and animosity of the Anti-federalists; that the Federalists, relying upon

this, might proceed in the certainty that, upon a *second* ballot, New York and Tennessee would join him. It is likewise ascertained that he perfectly understands himself with Edward Livingston, who will be his *agent* at the seat of government.

Thus you see that Mr. Burr is resolved to preserve himself in a situation to adhere to his former friends, engagements, and projects, and to use the Federalists as *tools* of his aggrandizement.

The hope that by his election he will be separated from the Anti-federalists, is a perfect farce.

He will satisfy them that he has kept himself free to continue his relations with them, and as many of them are secretly attached to him, they will all be speedily induced to rally under his standard, to which he will add the unprincipled of our party, and he will laugh at the rest.

It is a fact that Mr. Burr is now in frequent and close conference with a Frenchman, who is suspected of being an agent of the French Government, and it is not to be doubted that he will be the firm ally of Buonaparte.

You are at liberty to show this letter to such friends as you think fit, especially Mr. Bayard, of Delaware, in whose principles and sound sense I have much confidence.

Depend upon it, men never played a more foolish game than will do the Federalists if they support Burr.

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

ALBANY, Jan. 21, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

Being in a hurry to leave New York for this place, I compressed, in a letter to *Bayard*, some observations which, had I time, I should have put in a reply to your last. I requested him to communicate it to you, and I beg of you, as you love your country, your friends, and yourself, to reconsider dispassionately the opinion you have expressed in favor of Burr.

I never was so much mistaken as I shall be if our friends, in the event of their success, do not rue the preference they will give to that *Catiline*. Adieu.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

On the road to Albany, Feb., 1801.

The roads are too bad for you to venture in your carriage, if you can possibly avoid it. Don't forget to visit the Grange. From what I saw there, it is very important the drains should be better regulated. Leave, in particular charge of Philip, what you cannot yourself accomplish.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

February 19, 1801.

I arrived here, my beloved, about five this afternoon. I ought now to be much further advanced. But somehow "Riddle" sprained the ankle of one of his hind legs, which very much retarded my progress to-day. By care and indulgence, he is much better this evening. I have travelled comfortably, and my health is better. Wife, children, and hobby are the only things upon which I have permitted my thoughts to run. As often as I write, you may expect to hear some thing of the latter. Don't lose any opportunity which may offer of ploughing up the new garden spot, and let the wagon make a tour of the ground lately purchased. When it is too cold to go on with grubbing, our men may be employed in cutting and clearing away the underbrush in the grove and the other woods; only let the centre of the principal wood in the line of the different rocks remain rough and wild.

[*Again he writes*]: I am less and less pleased with the prospect of so long a separation from my beloved family, and you may depend shall shorten it as much as possible. "Dumphy" had planted the tulip trees in a row along the outer fence of the garden in the road, and was collecting

some hemlock trees to plant between them. I desired him to place these in a row along the inner fence. But, having attended to them in my route, I shall be glad, if white pines are not conveniently to be had, that besides those along the inner fence, there may be one hemlock between every two of the tulip trees along the outer fence.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

POUGHKEEPSIE, Feb. 20, 1801.

I am in much better health than spirits. The Swiss malady grows upon me very fast. In other words, I am more and more homesick. This, added to some other circumstances that do not give me pleasure at the present moment, makes me rather heavy-hearted. But we must make the best of those ills that cannot be avoided. The occupation I shall have at Albany will divert my mind from painful reflections; and a speedy return to my dear family will bring me a cure. Write me often, and receive every wish that is due to the best of women. Kiss my children for me. Adieu.*

TO ———.

ALBANY, Feb. 22, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

After my ill success hitherto, I ought, perhaps, in prudence, to say nothing further on the subject. But, situated as things now are, I certainly have no advice to give. Yet I may, without impropriety, communicate a fact; it is this:

Colonel Burr is taking an active *personal part* in favor of Mr. Clinton against Mr. Rensselaer, as governor of this State. I have, *upon my honor*, direct and indubitable evidence, that between two and three weeks past, he wrote a very urgent letter to *Oliver Phelps*, of the western part of

* These three letters to Mrs. Hamilton are reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vii., 488 and ff.

this State, to induce his exertions in favor of Clinton. Is not this an unequivocal confirmation of what I predicted, that he will, in every event, continue to play the Jacobin game? Can any thing else explain his conduct at such a moment, and under such circumstances? I might add several other things to prove that he is resolved to adhere to and cultivate his old party, who lately, more than ever, have shown the cloven foot of *rank Jacobinism.*

TO DR. BENJAMIN RUSH.*

NEW YORK, Feb. 12, 1802.

DEAR SIR:

I felt all the weight of the obligation which I owed to you and your amiable family for the tender concern they manifested in an event beyond comparison the most afflicting of my life, but I was obliged to wait for a moment of greater calm to express my sense of the kindness.

My loss is indeed great. The brightest as well as the eldest hope of my family has been taken from me. You estimated him rightly. He was a fine youth. But why should I repine? It was the will of heaven, and he is now out of the reach of the seductions and calamities of a world full of folly, full of vice, full of danger—of least value in proportion as it is best known. I firmly trust, also, that he has safely reached the haven of eternal repose and felicity.

You will easily imagine that every memorial of the goodness of his heart must be precious to me. You allude to one recorded in a letter to your son. If no special reasons forbid it, I should be very glad to have a copy of that letter.

Mrs. Hamilton, who has drunk deeply of the cup of sorrow, joins me in affectionate thanks to Mrs. Rush and yourself; our wishes for your happiness will be unceasing.

* The distinguished physician and patriot of Philadelphia. The letter refers to the death of Hamilton's eldest son, Philip, who was killed in a duel arising from a political quarrel.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, Feb. 27, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 22d is the third favor I am indebted to you since you left New York.

Your frankness in giving me your opinion as to the expediency of an application of our bar to Congress, obliged me. But you know we are not readily persuaded to think we have been wrong. Were the matter to be done over, I should pursue the same course. I did not believe the measure would be useful as a preventive, and for the people an expression of an opinion by letter would be as good as a memorial.

It appeared to be best, because it saved our delicacy, and because in the abstract, I am not over fond of the precedent of the bar addressing Congress. But I did what I thought likely to do more good. I *induced* the Chamber of Commerce to send a memorial. As to the rest, I should be a very unhappy man, if I left my tranquillity at the mercy of the misinterpretations which friends as well as foes are fond of giving to my conduct.

Mine is an odd destiny. Perhaps no man in the United States has sacrificed or done more for the present Constitution than myself; and contrary to all my anticipations of its fate, as you know from the very beginning, I am still laboring to prop the frail and worthless fabric. Yet I have the murmurs of its friends no less than the curses of its foes for my reward. What can I do better than withdraw from the scene? Every day proves to me more and more, that this American world was not made for me.

The suggestions with which you close your letter suppose a much sounder state of the public mind than at present exists. Attempts to make a show of a general *popular* dislike of the pending measures of the government, would only serve to manifest the direct reverse. Impressions are indeed making, but as yet within a very narrow sphere.

The time may erelong arrive when the minds of men

will be prepared to make an effort to *recover* the Constitution, but the many cannot now be brought to make a stand for its preservation. We must wait a while.

I have read your speeches with great pleasure. They are truly worthy of you. Your real friends had many sources of satisfaction on account of them. The conspiracy of dulness was at work. It chose to misinterpret your moderation in certain transactions of a personal reference.

A public energetic display of your talents and principles was requisite to silence the cavillers. It is now done. You, friend Morris, are by *birth* a native of this country, but by *genius* an exotic. You mistake, if you fancy that you are more of a favorite than myself, or that you are in any sort upon a theatre suited to you.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, March 4, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

You have seen certain resolutions unanimously pass our Legislature for amending the Constitution; 1st, by designating separately the candidates for President and Vice-President; 2d, by having electors chosen by the people in districts under the direction of the national Legislature.

After mature reflection, I was thoroughly confirmed in my full impression, that it is true federal policy to promote the adoption of these amendments.

Of the first, not only because it is in itself right, that the people should know whom they are choosing, and because the present mode gives all possible scope to intrigue, and is dangerous (as we have seen) to the public tranquillity; but because in every thing which gives opportunity for juggling arts, our adversaries will nine time out of ten excel us.

Of the second, because it removes thus far the intervention of the State governments, and strengthens the connection between the Federal head and the people, and because it diminishes the means of party combination, in which also,

the burning zeal of our opponents will be generally an overmatch for our temperate flame.

I shall be very happy that our friends may think with me, and that no temporary motive may induce them to let slip the precious occasion in which personal motives induce the other party to forget their true policy.

We are told here, that at the close of your birthday feast, a strange *apparition*, which was taken for the Vice-President, appeared among you, and toasted "the union of all honest men." I often hear at the corner of the streets important federal secrets, of which I am ignorant. This may be one.

If the story be true, 't is a good thing, if we use it well. As an *instrument*, the person will be an auxiliary of *some* value; as a chief, he will disgrace and destroy the party.

I suspect, however, the folly of the mass will make him the latter, and from the moment it shall appear that this is the plan, it may be depended upon much more will be lost than gained. I know of no important character, who has a less *founded* interest than the man in question. His talents may do well enough for a particular plot, but they are ill suited to a great and wise *drama*. But what has wisdom to do with weak men? Adieu.

TO GENERAL CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY.

March 15, 1802.

You will probably have learned before this reaches you that the act of last session for the better organization of the Judiciary Department has been repealed, and I take it for granted that you will, with me, view this measure as a vital blow to the Constitution. In my opinion it demands a systematic and persevering effort by all constitutional means to produce a revocation of the precedent, and to restore the Constitution. For this purpose I deem it essential that there should be, without delay, a meeting and conference of a small number of leading Federalists from different States. Unless there shall be a plan of conduct

proceeding from such a source, our measures will be disjointed, discordant, and of course ineffectual. There is also a further danger which may attend the want of a plan capable of fixing opinions and determining objects. There are among us incorrect men with very incorrect views, which may lead to combinations and projects injurious to us as a party and very detrimental to the country. These considerations have determined me to make an attempt to bring about such a meeting. And it has occurred that the first Monday of May next, at the city of Washington, may be a good time and place. A general meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati is to be then and there held. I have likewise taken the liberty to request the attendance of Governor Davie, of North Carolina. In the event of your concurring in sentiment with me, it will be expedient for you to second my invitation to him.*

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, April 6, 1802.

Amidst the humiliating circumstances which attend our country, all the sound part of the community must find cause of triumph in the brilliant display of talents which have been employed, though without success, in resisting the follies of an infatuated administration; and your personal friends will not have much reason for mortification on account of the part you have performed in the interesting scene. But, my dear sir, we must not content ourselves with a temporary effort to oppose the approach of evil. We must derive instruction from the experience before us; and learning to form a just estimate of things to which we have been attached, there must be a systematic and persevering endeavor to establish the fortune of a great empire on foundations much firmer than have yet been devised. What will signify a vibration of power if it cannot be used with confidence or energy, and must be again quickly

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vii., 564.

restored to hands which will prostrate much faster than we shall be able to rear under so frail a system? Nothing will be done until the structure of our national edifice shall be such as naturally to control eccentric passions and views, and to keep in check demagogues and knaves in the disguise of patriots. Yet I fear a different reasoning will prevail, and an eagerness to recover lost power will betray us into expedients which will be injurious to the country and disgraceful and ruinous to ourselves. What meant the *apparition* and the *toast* which made part of the *after-piece* of the *birthday festival?* Is it possible that some new intrigue is about to link the Federalists with a man who can never be any thing else than the bane of a good cause? I dread more from this than from all the contrivances of the bloated and senseless junto of Virginia.

The Federalists and Anti-federalists of this State united in certain amendments to the Constitution now before your House, having for objects, 1st, to discriminate the candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency; 2d, to have the electors of these officers chosen by the people, in districts, under the direction of Congress. Both these appear to me points of importance in true federal calculation. Surely the scene of last session ought to teach us the intrinsic demerits of the existing plan. It proved to us how possible it is for a man in whom no party had confidence, and who deserved the confidence of none, by mere intrigue and accident, to acquire the first place in the government of our nation; and it also proves to us how serious a danger of convulsion and disorder is incident to the plan. On this point things have come to my knowledge, improper for a letter, which would astonish you. Surely, we ought by this time to have learnt that whatever multiplies the opportunities and means of cabal, is more favorable to our adversaries than to us. They have certainly the advantage in the game by greater zeal, activity, and subtlety, and especially by an abandonment of principle. On all these accounts it is our true policy to abridge the facilities to cabal as much as possible in all our

public institutions and measures. As to the second of the amendments, it has ever appeared to me as sound principle to let the federal government rest, as much as possible, *on the shoulders of the people*, and as little as possible on those of the State Legislatures. The proposition accords with this principle, and, in my view, it is further recommended by its tendency to exclude *combinations*, which, I am persuaded, in the general and permanent course of things, will operate more against than for us. Colonel Burr, without doubt, will resist these amendments; and he may induce some of our friends to play into his hands; but this will be a very bad calculation, even admitting the inadmissible idea that he ought to be adopted as a chief of the federal party. We never can have him fairly in our power, till we render his situation absolutely hopeless with his old friends. While the indiscriminate voting prevails, he will find it his interest to play fast and loose, and to keep himself in a state to be at the head of the anti-federal party. If these hopes are cut off, he will immediately set about forming a third party, of which he will be at the head; and then, if we think it worth the while, we can purchase him with his flying squadrons.

These observations are, of course, hypothetical, for, to my mind, the elevation of Mr. Burr, by federal means, to the chief magistracy of the United States, will be the worst kind of political suicide.

TO JAMES A. BAYARD.

NEW YORK, April, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 12th instant has relieved me from some apprehension. Yet it is well that it should be perfectly understood by the truly sound part of the Federalists that there do, in fact, exist intrigues in good earnest between several individuals not unimportant, of the federal party, and the person in question, which are bottomed upon motives and views by no means auspicious to the real

welfare of the country. I am glad to find that it is in contemplation to adopt a plan of conduct. It is very necessary; and, to be useful, it must be efficient and comprehensive in the means which it embraces, at the same time that it must meditate none which are not really constitutional and patriotic. I will comply with your invitation by submitting some ideas which, from time to time, have passed through my mind. Nothing is more fallacious than to expect to produce any valuable or permanent results in political projects by relying merely on the reason of men. Men are rather reasoning than reasonable animals, for the most part governed by the impulse of passion. This is a truth well understood by our adversaries, who have practised upon it with no small benefit to their cause; for at the very moment they are eulogizing the reason of men, and professing to appeal only to that faculty, they are courting the strongest and most active passion of the human heart, *vanity!* It is no less true, that the Federalists seem not to have attended to the fact sufficiently; and that they erred in relying so much on the rectitude and utility of their measures as to have neglected the cultivation of popular favor, by fair and justifiable expedients. The observation has been repeatedly made by me to individuals with whom I particularly conversed, and expedients suggested for gaining good will, which were never adopted. Unluckily, however, for us, in the competition for the passions of the people, our opponents have great advantages over us; for the plain reason that the vicious are far more active than the good passions; and that, to win the former to our side, we must renounce our principles and our objects, and unite in corrupting public opinion till it becomes fit for nothing but mischief. Yet, unless we can contrive to take hold of, and carry along with us some strong feelings of the mind, we shall in vain calculate upon any substantial or durable results. Whatever plan we may adopt, to be successful, must be founded on the truth of this proposition. And perhaps it is not very easy for us to give it full effects; especially not without some de-

viations from what, on other occasions, we have maintained to be right. But in determining upon the propriety of the deviations, we must consider whether it be possible for us to succeed, without, in some degree, employing the weapons which have been employed against us, and whether the actual state and future prospect of things be not such as to justify the reciprocal use of them. I need not tell you that I do not mean to countenance the imitation of things intrinsically unworthy, but only of such as may be denominated irregular; such as, in a sound and stable order of things, ought not to exist. Neither are you to infer that any revolutionary result is contemplated. In my opinion, the present Constitution is the standard to which we are to cling. Under its banners, *bona fide*, must we combat onr political foes, rejecting all changes but through the channel itself provides for amendments. By these general views of the subject have my reflections been guided. I now offer you the outline of the plan which they have suggested. Let an association be formed to be denominated "The Christian Constitutional Society." Its objects to be:

1st. The support of the Christian religion.

2d. The support of the Constitution of the United States.

Its organization.

1st. A council, consisting of a president and twelve members, of whom four and the president to be a quorum.

2d. A sub-directing council in each State, consisting of a vice president and twelve members, of whom four, with the vice-president, to be a quorum.

3d. As many societies in each State as local circumstances may permit to be formed by the sub-directing council.

The meeting at Washington to nominate the president and vice-president, together with four members of each of the councils, who are to complete their own *numbers* respectively.

Its means.

1st. The diffusion of information. For this purpose not only the newspapers, but pamphlets, must be largely em-

ployed, and to do this a fund must be created; five dollars annually, for eight years, to be contributed by each member who can really afford it (taking care not to burthen the less able brethren), may afford a competent fund for a competent term. It is essential to be able to dissemminate *gratis* useful publications. Wherever it can be done, and there is a press, clubs should be formed, to meet once a week, read the newspapers, and prepare essays, paragraphs, etc.

2d. The use of all lawful means in *concert* to promote the election of *fit* men; a lively correspondence must be kept up between the different societies.

3d. The promoting of institutions of a charitable and useful nature in the management of Federalists. The populous cities ought particularly to be attended to; perhaps it would be well to institute in such places—1st, societies for the relief of emigrants; 2d, academies, each with one professor, for instructing the different classes of mechanics in the principles of mechanics and the elements of chemistry. The cities have been employed by the Jacobins to give an impulse to the country; and it is believed to be an alarming fact that, while the question of presidential election was pending in the House of Representatives, parties were organizing in several of the cities in the event of there being no election, to cut off the leading Federalists and seize the government.

The foregoing to be the principal engine, and, in addition, let measures be adopted to bring as soon as possible the repeal of the judiciary law before the Supreme Court; afterwards, if not before, let as many Legislatures as can be prevailed upon instruct their Senators to endeavor to procure a repeal of the repealing law. The body of New England, speaking the same language, will give a powerful impulse. In Congress our friends to *propose* little, to agree cordially to all good measures, and to resist and expose all bad. This is a general sketch of what has occurred to me. It is at the service of my friends for so much as it may be worth.

TO RUFUS KING.

NEW YORK, June 3, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have been long very delinquent towards you as a correspondent, and am to thank you that you have not cast me off altogether as an irretrievable reprobate. But you know how to appreciate the causes, and you have made a construction equally just and indulgent.

In your last you ask my opinion about a matter delicate and important, both in a public and in a personal view. I shall give it with the frankness to which you have a right, and I may add that the impressions of your other friends, so far as they have fallen under my observation, do not differ from my own. While you were in the midst of a negotiation interesting to your country, it was your duty to keep your post. You have now accomplished the object, and with the good fortune, not very common, of having the universal plaudit. This done, it seems to me most advisable that you return home. There is little probability that your continuance in your present station will be productive of much positive good. Nor are circumstances such as to give reason to apprehend that the substitute for you, whoever he may be, can do much harm. Your stay or return, therefore, as it regards our transatlantic concerns, is probably not material, while your presence at home may be useful in ways which it is not necessary to particularize. Besides, it is questionable whether you can long continue in the service of the present administration consistently with what is due, as well to your own character as to the common cause. I am far from thinking that a man is bound to quit a public office merely because the administration of the government may have changed hands. But when those who have come into power are undisguised persecutors of the party to which he has been attached, and study with ostentation to heap upon it every indignity and injury, he ought not, in my opinion, to permit himself to be made an exception, or to lend his talents to the support of such characters. If, in

addition to this, it be true that the principles and plans of the men at the head of affairs tend to the degradation of the government, and to their own disgrace, it will hardly be possible to be in any way connected with them without sharing in the disrepute which they may be destined to experience.

I wish I had time to give you a comprehensive and particular map of our political situation; but more than a rude outline is beyond my leisure, devoted as I am more than ever to my professional pursuits.

You have seen the course of the administration hitherto, especially during the last session of Congress, and I am persuaded you will agree with me in opinion, that it could hardly have been more diligent in mischief. What, you will ask, has been and is likely to be the effect on the public mind?

Our friends are sanguine that a great change for the better has been wrought and is progressive. I suppose good has been done—that the Federalists have been reunited and cemented; have been awakened, alarmed. Perhaps, too, there may be some sensible and moderate men of the opposite party who are beginning to doubt. But I as yet discover no satisfactory symptoms of a revolution of opinion in the mass—"informe ingens cui lumen ademptum." Nor do I look with much expectation to any serious alteration until inconveniences are extensively felt, or until time has produced a disposition to coquet it with new lovers. Vibrations of power, you are aware, are of the genius of our government.

There is, however a circumstance which may accelerate the fall of the present party. There is certainly a most serious schism between the chief and his heir-apparent; a schism absolutely incurable, because founded in the hearts of both, in the rivalship of an insatiable and unprincipled ambition. The effects are already apparent, and are ripening into a more bitter animosity between the partisans of the two men, than ever existed between the Federalists and Anti-federalists.

Unluckily, we are not as neutral to this quarrel as we ought to be. You saw, however, how far our friends in Congress went in polluting themselves with the support of the second personage for the Presidency. The cabal did not terminate there. Several men of no inconsiderable importance among us like the enterprising and adventurous character of this man, and hope to soar with him to power. Many more, through hatred to the chief, and through an impatience to recover the reins, are linking themselves to the new chief almost without perceiving it, and professing to have no other object than to make use of him; while he knows that he is making use of them. What this may end in, it is difficult to perceive.

Of one thing only I am sure, that in no event will I be directly or indirectly implicated in a responsibility for the elevation or support of either of two men who, in different senses, are in my eyes equally unworthy of the confidence of intelligent or honest men.

Truly, my dear sir, the prospects of our country are not brilliant. The mass is far from sound. At head-quarters a most visionary theory presides. Depend upon it, this is the fact to a great extreme. No army, no navy, no *active* commerce; national defence, not by arms, but by embargoes, prohibitions of trade, etc.; as little government as possible within; —these are the pernicious dreams which, as far and as fast as possible, will be attempted to be realized. Mr. Jefferson is distressed at the codfish having latterly emigrated to the southern coast, lest the people there should be tempted to catch them, and commerce, of which we have already too much, receive an accession. Be assured this is no pleasantry, but a very sober anecdote.

Among Federalists old errors are not cured. They also continue to dream, though not quite so preposterously as their opponents. All will be very well (say they) when the power once gets back into federal hands. The people, convinced by experience of their error, will repose a permanent confidence in good men. *Risum teneatis.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING POST."

NEW YORK, Aug. 10, 1802.

SIR:

Finding that a story, long since propagated, under circumstances which it was expected would soon consign it to oblivion (and by which I have been complimented at the expense of Generals Washington and Lafayette), has of late been revived, and has acquired a degree of importance by being repeated in different publications, as well in Europe as America, it becomes a duty to counteract its currency and influence by an explicit disavowal. The story imports in substance, that General Lafayette, with the approbation or connivance of General Washington, ordered me, as the officer who was to command the attack on a British redoubt, in the course of the siege of York Town, to put to death all those of the enemy who should happen to be taken in the redoubt, and that, through motives of humanity, I forbore to execute the order. Positively and unequivocally I declare, that no such nor similar order, nor any intimation nor hint resembling it, was ever by me received, or understood to have been given. It is needless to enter into an explanation of some occurrences on the occasion alluded to, which may be conjectured to have given rise to the calumny. It is enough to say that they were entirely disconnected with any act of either of the generals who have been accused.

With esteem, I am, sir, your most obedient servant.*

TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

GRANGE, Aug. 14, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

When you were last in town, I proposed to communicate to you the outline of a project, by which I think you may enter upon a career of business beneficial to yourself and friends. My almost constant attendance at court ever since

* Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," ii., 271.

you were here, has retarded the communication which I shall now make.

Let a commercial capital be found, to consist of 100,000 dollars, divided into shares of $100 each. A subscriber to pay in cash *one tenth* of his subscription, and for the residue 7 per centum per annum. It will then be his interest to pay up as soon as he can.

The subscribers to form a partnership, under the firm of Oliver Wolcott & Co.; Oliver Wolcott alone to have the signature of the firm, and the active management of the affairs of the company, with an allowance of $1,500 per annum out of the profits for the trouble of management, besides his share of profits as a partner.

Oliver Wolcott and two others of the partners to form a board of direction, to plan, etc.

Clerks and all incidental expenses to be paid out of the fund.

The objects of the company.

1. Agencies of purchase and sales of lands, stocks, etc.

2. Factorage of cargoes, consigned on commission; purchases of goods on commission, etc.; in brief, "the business of a commission merchant merely."

3. Purchases at auction, and sales of the articles purchased.

4. Loans of money on deposit of goods, with a right, if not redeemed in time, to sell on commission, perhaps.

Speculative enterprises in navigation and commerce to be excluded.

In a company thus formed under your management, I should be willing to become a partner for from 5 to 10,000 dollars, and I have no doubt that the capital will be readily formed of confidential and trustworthy characters, who would insure great credit to the house. I am also confident, that when it should be known in Europe that certain characters were of the company, it would attract a good portion of profitable employment.

I will enter into no further detail. If the project impresses you favorably, come to New York, and we will give it form, and finish and prepare for execution. Do not lightly reject it.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

GRANGE, Sept. 4, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

I fully intended to have dined with you to-day, but, going to town the two last days, and forgetting that I ought to observe a regimen, I have brought back, in some degree, the complaint which lately annoyed me, and which requires to be well watched. This must deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you.

I send schedules of the papers required of Tillier, all which have been put into my hands; the bills to remain till the close of the affair; the other documents to be delivered to your order.

I also send a draught of the trust deed. It endeavors to comply with your suggestion, as far as can be done without running foul of the danger desired to be avoided.

Your guests are invited to dine with us Thursday next. Will you make one?

TO GENERAL CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY.

GRANGE (New York), Dec. 29, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR:

A garden, you know, is a very useful refuge of a disappointed politician. Acccordingly, I have purchased a few acres about nine miles from town, have built a house, and am cultivating a garden. The *melons* in your country are very fine. Will you have the goodness to send me some seed, both of the water and musk melons? My daughter adds another request, which is for three or four of your paroquets. She is very fond of birds. If there be any thing in this quarter the sending of which can give you pleasure, you have only to name them. As *farmers*, a new source of sympathy has arisen between us, and I am pleased with every thing in which our likings and tastes can be approximated. Amidst the triumphant reign of democracy, do you retain sufficient interest in public affairs to feel any curi-

osity about what is going on? In my opinion, the follies and vices of the administration have as yet made no material impression to their disadvantage. On the contrary, I think the malady is rather progressive than upon the decline in our Northern quarter. The last *lullaby* message, instead of inspiring contempt, attracts praise. Mankind are forever destined to be the dupes of bold or cunning imposture. But a difficult knot has been twisted by the incidents of the cession of Louisiana, and the interruption of the deposit of New Orleans. You have seen the soft turn given to this in the message. Yet we are told that the President, in conversation, is very stout. The great embarrassment must be how to carry on the war without taxes. The pretty scheme of substituting economy to taxation will not do here. And a war would be a terrible comment upon the abandonment of the internal revenue. Yet how is popularity to be preserved with the Western partisans if their interests are tamely sacrificed? Will the artifice be for the chief to hold a bold language, and the subalterns to act a feeble part? Time must explain You know my general theory as to our Western affairs. I have always held that the *unity of our empire* and the best interests of our nation require that we shall annex to the United States all the territory east of the Mississippi, New Orleans included. Of course I infer that, in an emergency like the present, energy is wisdom.

Mrs. Hamilton joins me in affectionate compliments to Mrs. Pinckney.

TO TIMOTHY PICKERING. *

NEW YORK, Sept. 18, 1803.

MY DEAR SIR:

I will make no apology for my delay in answering your inquiry, some time since made, because I could offer none which would satisfy myself. I pray you only to believe that it proceeded from any thing rather than want of respect or

* At this time Senator from Massachusetts.

regard. I shall now comply with your request. The highest-toned propositions which I made in the convention were for a President, Senate, and Judges during good behavior—a House of Representatives for three years. Though I would have enlarged the legislative power of the general government, yet I never contemplated the abolition of the State governments, but on the contrary, they were, in some particulars, constituent parts of my plan. This plan was, in my conception, conformable with the strict theory of a government purely republican, the essential criteria of which are that the principal organs of the executive and legislative departments be elected by the people, and hold their offices by a *responsible* and temporary or *defeasible* tenure. A vote was taken on the proposition respecting the executive. Five States were in favor of it, among these Virginia, and though, from the manner of voting—by delegations,—individuals were not distinguished, it was morally certain, from the known situation of the Virginia members (six in number, two of them *Mason* and *Randolph*, professing popular doctrines), that *Madison* must have concurred in the vote of Virginia; thus, if I sinned against *republicanism*, Mr. Madison was not less guilty. I may truly then say that I never proposed either a President or Senate for life, and that I neither recommended nor meditated the annihilation of the State governments. And I may add that, in the course of the discussions in the convention, neither the propositions thrown out for debate, nor even those voted in the earlier stages of the deliberation, were considered as evidences of a definitive opinion in the proposer or voter.* It appeared to me to be in some sort understood that, with a view to free investigation, experimental propositions might be made, which were to be received merely as suggestions for consideration. Accordingly, it is a fact that my final opinion was against an Executive during good behavior, on account of the increased danger to the public tranquillity incident to the election of a magistrate of this degree of

* See Madison papers, ii., 724-762.

permanency. In the plan of a constitution which I drew up while the convention was sitting, and which I communicated to Mr. Madison about the close of it, perhaps a day or two after, the office of President has no greater duration than for three years.* This plan was predicated upon these bases: 1. That the political principles of the people of this country would endure nothing but republican government. 2. That in the actual situation of the country, it was in itself right and proper that the republican theory should have a fair and full trial. 3. That to such a trial it was essential that the government should be so constructed as to give all the energy and stability reconcilable with the principles of that theory.

These were the genuine sentiments of my heart, and upon them I acted. I sincerely hope that it may not hereafter be discovered that, through want of sufficient attention to the last idea, the experiment of republican government, even in this country, has not been as complete, as satisfactory, and as decisive as could be wished.

TO RUFUS KING.

ALBANY, Feb. 24, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR:

You will have heard before this reaches you of the fluctuations and changes which have taken place in the measures of the reigning party, as to a candidate for governor; and you will probably have also been informed that, pursuant to the opinions professed by our friends, before I left New York I had taken an active part in favor of Mr. Lansing.

It is a fact to be regretted, though anticipated, that the Federalists very extensively had embarked with zeal in the support of Mr. Burr; yet an impression to the contrary, and in favor of Mr. Lansing, had been made, and there was good ground to hope that a proper direction in the main might have been given to the current of Federalism. The substi-

* See Madison papers, iii.; appendix xvi. and xxi.

tution of Mr. Lewis has essentially varied the prospect, and the best informed among us here agree that the Federalists, as a body, could not be diverted from Mr. Burr to Mr. Lewis, by any efforts of leading characters, if they should even deem the support of the latter expedient.

Though I have no reason to think that my original calculation was wrong, while the competition was between Clinton and Burr, yet from the moment the former declined, I began to consider the latter as having a chance of success. It was still, however, my reliance that *Lansing* would outrun him; but now that Chief-Justice Lewis is the competitor, the probability in my judgment inclines to Mr. Burr.

Thus situated, two questions have arisen; first, whether a federal candidate ought not to be run, as a means of supporting Mr. Burr, and of keeping the Federalists from becoming a personal faction allied to him. Second, whether, in the conflict of parties as they now stand, the strongest of them disconcerted and disjointed, there would not be a considerable hope of success for a federal candidate.

These questions have received no solution in scarcely any one's mind; but it is agreed that, if an attempt is to be made, you must be the candidate. There is no other man among us under whose standard either fragment of the democratic party could as easily rally. It is enough to say, you have been absent during the time in which party animosities have become matured and fixed, and, therefore, are much less than any other distinguished Federalist, an object of them.

To detach the Federalists from Burr, they must believe *two* things: *one*, that we are in earnest as to our candidate, and that it is not a mere diversion; the *other*, that there is some chance of success. All believe, and some leading candidates admit, that if either of the two democratic rival parties should come to expect a defeat, they will range themselves under your banner.

Reflect well on all these things, and make up your mind in case you should be invited to consent. I have not time to enlarge.

TO GOVERNOR GEORGE CLINTON.

ALBANY, Feb. 27, 1804.

SIR:

It is now a long time since a very odious slander* has been in circulation to the prejudice of my character.

It has come to my ears in more than one way, but always, till lately, without the disclosure of any source to which I could resort for explanation or detection. Within a few days, Mr. Kane, of this city, related to me a story as coming from Judge Purdy, in substance very similar to the calumny to which I have alluded. The amount of his information, and the result of an interview with Judge Purdy, are contained in the enclosed paper.† You will observe, sir, that

* To the effect that he was the author of a letter proposing a monarchical government, in 1788, with Prince Frederick, Duke of York, and titular Bishop of Osnaburg, as king. Clinton finally disclaimed all belief in the accusation.

† The following letter is the paper referred to. It is taken from the Clinton papers, and I owe it to the kindness of Mr. Henry A. Homes, State Librarian of New York:

"Some time in the month of January last I called on the Hon. Jacob Snell, a member of the Council of Appointment, where I found the Hon. Ebenezer Purdy, together with a Mr. Hughes and one or two other gentlemen, whose names I do not recollect. Mr. Purdy immediately asked me if I had any objection to hear an oration read that was delivered on the Fourth of July by a young Irishman, who, if I mistake not, then resided in his family. I replied, Certainly not. It was a violent philippic against the Federal administration; the stamp act, sedition law, standing army, etc., were represented as the leading features of the Federal faction. After some considerable conversation on the merits of the oration, between Mr. Purdy and myself, he remarked that he fully believed monarchy was the object of the Federalists; that there was a person who did not wish to have his name mentioned who could prove the fact, and stood ready to make affidavit of it. That some time in the year of '98 a negotiation was opened between Gen. Hamilton, Mr. Adams, and the King of England, for the purpose of introducing monarchy into this country, at the head of which was to be placed one of the royal family, and that Canada was to be ceded to the States. For the truth of the above, Mr. Purdy referred me to Governor Clinton, who he said would not deny it, altho' he did not wish to say any thing about it.

"On the 23d of January, 1804, Gen. Hamilton and myself called upon Mr. Purdy for the purpose of investigating the affair. Gen. Hamilton introduced the subject to Mr. Purdy by telling him he had received information from Mr.

your name is implicated in the transaction. With what warrant, it would be improper for me to prejudge. But the very mention of your name adds importance to the affair, and increases the motives to investigation.

The charge, even in the mitigated form to which it is reduced by Judge Purdy's admission, is of a nature too derogatory to permit me to pass it lightly over. It is essential that its origin and progress should be traced as fully as may be practicable, in order to the thorough exposure of its falsehood and malignity.

The assertions of Judge Purdy authorize me to appeal to you for a frank and candid explanation of so much of the matter as relates to yourself. This explanation I request as speedily as may be.

Kane of certain declarations [of] a nature very interesting to his character, which he was determined to have explained and investigated. I then related to Mr. Purdy the conversation he had with me, as above stated. Mr. Purdy replied: 'What you have said, Mr. Kane, is pretty nearly correct (or words to that effect), with this difference: I did not mention Mr. Adams' name, and that affair which I spoke of to you did not happen in '98, but some time previous to the convention which formed the present Constitution of the United States. What I told you was nearly this: That somebody in England had made proposals to somebody at the Eastward for establishing a monarchy in this country, and placing at the head of it a son of the King of Great Britain; that some letters or papers containing these proposals were sent to Gen. Hamilton, copies of which were made in his office to be distributed amongst certain persons." Mr. Purdy then asked me if this was not the substance of what he had told me. I said that the difference was between that and what I had before stated, and recapitulated what I have before said. I also pressed upon Mr. Purdy what I had before stated respecting Gov. Clinton, and questioned him whether he had not made such an appeal to Gov. Clinton, and also whether he had not affirmed that there was a person who could attest the truth of the story. Mr. Purdy persisted in the statement which he had just made. As to Gov. Clinton, he admitted that he had mentioned to the Governor the story he had heard, and that the Governor had replied that he had had one of the letters. On being interrogated by Gen. Hamilton, whether he had mentioned his name to Gov. Clinton, he answered he was not sure whether he had done it or not. On being further interrogated as to his having said there was a person ready to prove the transaction he had stated, he answered there was a person who had assured him of his knowledge of the transaction as it was now stated by him. A variety of other conversation passed, but the above comprises the most material particulars. (Signed) JAMES KANE."

TO GOVERNOR GEORGE CLINTON.

SIR: ALBANY, March 2, 1804.

If our correspondence does not terminate with your letter of the 29th February, received yesterday, I wish it to be understood that it proceeds merely from the desire of removing all ambiguity from a transaction in which my character may be materially interested.

It is perhaps the natural inference from what you have stated, that nothing took place on your part to sanction or corroborate the story related to you by Judge Purdy, in reference to any agency or co-operation of mine in the supposed project. Yet some of the circumstances are such, that a different inference might possibly be drawn.

I therefore trust that you will be sensible of the propriety of dissipating all obscurity on this point.

If the letter, which you mention to have been put in your hands by General Malcolm, was not withdrawn by him, or if any copy was retained by you, it would be satisfactory to me to have an inspection of the one or the other, with leave to take a copy, in order that I may have an additional clue to the source of a story, which I verily believe originated entirely in a fabrication.

TO GOVERNOR GEORGE CLINTON.

SIR: ALBANY, March 7, 1804.

On Saturday last I sent you a letter, of which the foregoing is a copy, to which, as yet, I have received no reply.

Intending to leave this place for New York on Saturday next, it is important that I should receive an answer before that day.

TO GOVERNOR GEORGE CLINTON.

SIR: ALBANY, March 9, 1804.

I had the honor of receiving yesterday your Excellency's letter of the 6th instant. It is agreeable to me to find in it a confirmation of the inference that you had given no coun-

tenance to the supposition of my agency or co-operation in the project to which the story of Judge Purdy relates; and it only remains for me to regret that it is not in your power to furnish the additional clue, of which I was desirous, to aid me in tracing the fabrication to its source.

I shall not only rely on the assurance which you give as to the future communication of the copy of the letter in question, should it hereafter come to your hands, but I will take the liberty to add a request, that you will be pleased to make known to me any other circumstances, if any should reach you, which may serve to throw light upon the affair. I feel an anxiety that it should be thoroughly sifted, not merely on my own account, but from a conviction that the pretended existence of such a project, long travelling about in whispers, has had no inconsiderable influence in exciting false alarms, and unjust suspicions to the prejudice of a number of individuals, every way worthy of public confidence, who have always faithfully supported the existing institutions of the country, and who would disdain to be concerned in an intrigue with any foreign power, or its agents, either for introducing monarchy, or for promoting or upholding any other scheme of government within the United States.

TO TALLEYRAND.

NEW YORK, March 25, 1804.

SIR:

Presuming on the acquaintance, from which I derived so much pleasure during your stay in this country, I am going to take a very great liberty. It concerns a near relation of mine, Mr. Alexander Hamilton, now a prisoner of war on parole at Paris.

His brother, from whom I have just received a letter, informs me that, being on a visit to the continent as a traveller, he was overtaken by the war between France and

Great Britain, and has been since that time in the situation which I have mentioned. He is a Scotch gentleman of education and literary acquirements, who, having amassed a pretty handsome fortune in the East Indies, had returned to his own country to devote himself to the pursuits of knowledge, and was induced to pass over to the continent to indulge his curiosity, with a particular eye to the very interesting monuments of the arts, of which Paris is now the depository.

I will ask nothing specific for him, because I know not what could with propriety be done, contenting myself with merely saying, that if your interposition can procure for him any facility, indulgence, or favor, it will confer a personal obligation on one who has the honor to remain, etc.

TO ———.

NEW YORK, April 13, 1804.

DEAR SIR:

The post of to-day brought me a letter from you, and another from Mr. ———. I have no doubt but the latter would serve you if he could; but he cannot at this time.

On the whole, I would advise you to return to New York, and accept any respectable employment in your way, till an opportunity of something better shall occur. 'T is by practice and perseverance that we can expect to vanquish difficulties, and better an unpleasant condition.

Arraign not the dispensations of Providence, they must be founded in wisdom and goodness; and when they do not suit us, it must be because there is some fault in ourselves which deserves chastisement; or because there is a kind intent, to correct in us some vice or failing, of which, perhaps, we may not be conscious; or because the general plan requires that we should suffer partial ill.

In this situation it is our duty to cultivate resignation, and even humility, bearing in mind, in the language of the poet, "that it was pride which lost the blest abodes."*

* Now first printed from the Hamilton papers in the State Department.

TO PHILIP J. SCHUYLER.*

April 20, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR:

I did not write to you on the subject of the awards, because I was in correspondence with Mr. Jacob Van Rensselaer respecting the matter.

He has sent me the draughts of deeds which I shall in a few days inspect, and return with such suggestions as may be requisite.

The things most urgent are—1. The completion of the survey, which Mr. R. writes me is in train.—2. The appointment of a guardian for Mr. Kane's daughter at Schenectady. On both objects, I have written particularly to Mr. J. Van Rensselaer.

I say nothing on politics, with the course of which I am too much disgusted to give myself any future concern about them.†

TO JAMES A. HAMILTON.

1804.

MY DEAR JAMES:

I have prepared for you a Thesis on Discretion. You may need it. God bless you.

Your affectionate father.‡

TO THEODORE SEDGWICK.

NEW YORK, July 10, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received two letters from you since we last saw each other, that of the latest date being the 24th of May. I have had on hand for some time a long letter to you, explaining my view of the course and tendency of our politics, and my intentions as to my own future conduct. But my plan embraced so large a range that, owing to much avo-

* Hamilton's brother-in-law.

† This letter, now first printed, I owe to the kindness of Mr. Henry A. Homes, State Librarian at Albany.

‡ Reprinted from the "Reminiscences of James A. Hamilton," p. 40.

cation, some indifferent health, and a growing distaste to politics, the letter is still considerably short of being finished. I write this now to satisfy you that want of regard for you has not been the cause of my silence.

I will here express but one sentiment, which is, that dismemberment of our empire will be a clear sacrifice of great positive advantages without any counterbalancing good, administering no relief to our real disease, which is *democracy*, the poison of which, by a subdivision, will only be the more concentrated in each part, and consequently the more virulent. King is on his way for Boston, where you may chance to see him, and hear from himself his sentiments. God bless you.*

[This letter and the next were omitted by an oversight, and are therefore given here.]

TO GENERAL JOHN SULLIVAN.

HEADQUARTERS, 1778.

SIR:

His Excellency has received your two last favors to-day. In the first you hint the want of a reinforcement, but as the intention of your body is chiefly for observation and skirmishing, and not to make any serious stands, it is the less necessary it should be powerful in numbers. It will, however, depend upon circumstances how far it will be expedient to reinforce; and as soon as any thing can be determined from them, you shall have whatever addition of strength you may stand in need of.

The information contained in your last, of the enemy's being encamped on the road leading from New Brunswick to Princeton, about the Third Mile Run, is not well founded. We have had parties and officers, reconnoitring as far as the Mile Run, and there is no sign of an encampment. They seem to be taking their old position with their right at Amboy, their left at Brunswick; but how long they will remain so it is hard to tell. His Excellency desires you

* The day after this letter was written Hamilton was killed by Burr.

will engage some trusty person at South Amboy, on whom you can depend for faithful and early intelligence of the appearance of shipping in the river, or any preparation for a movement by water, that we may be in time prepared to counteract them.

TO WASHINGTON.

AMBOY, March 17, 1780.

DEAR SIR:

I duly received your letter of the fourteenth, and shall not fail, in conjunction with General St. Clair, to attend to the military object of it. I am much obliged to your Excellency for the communication of your Southern advices. The enemy are still in the dark about their fleet and army gone that way, as we gather from the commissioners. They pretend to have little European news, though a vessel arrived two or three days since from England, after ten weeks' passage. We send you some late New York papers.

The commission has been several days at an end. The enemy, as was supposed, had no idea of treating on national ground. We are now in private conversation, and so far not without hopes that the liberation of our prisoners will be effected on *admissible* terms. Two or three days more will probably put an end to the interview. General St. Clair and Colonel Carrington beg their respects may be presented to your Excellency.

[Correspondence relating to the duel with Burr. Reprinted from the "History of the Republic," vii., 805, *et seq.*]

A. BURR TO GENERAL HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, June 18, 1804.

SIR:

I send you for your perusal a letter signed Charles D. Cooper, which, though apparently published some time ago, has but very recently come to my knowledge. Mr.

Van Ness, who does me the honor to deliver this, will point out to you that clause of the letter to which I particularly request your attention. You must perceive, sir, the necessity of a prompt, unqualified acknowledgment or denial of the use of any expressions which would warrant the assertions of Dr. Cooper.

HAMILTON TO BURR.

NEW YORK, June 20, 1804.

SIR:

I have maturely reflected on the subject of your letter of the eighteenth instant, and the more I have reflected, the more I have become convinced that I could not, without manifest impropriety, make the avowal or disavowal which you seem to think necessary. The clause pointed out by Mr. Van Ness is in these terms: "I could detail to you a still more despicable opinion which General Hamilton has expressed of Mr. Burr." To endeavor to discover the meaning of this declaration, I was obliged to seek in the antecedent part of this letter for the opinion to which it referred, as having been already disclosed. I found it in these words: "General Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared in substance that they looked upon Mr. Burr to be a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government."

The language of Dr. Cooper plainly implies that he considered this opinion of you, which he attributes to me, as a despicable one; but he affirms that I have expressed some other, more despicable, without, however, mentioning to whom, when, or where. 'T is evident that the phrase "still more despicable" admits of infinite shades, from very light to very dark. How am I to judge of the degree intended, or how shall I annex any precise idea to language so indefinite?

Between gentlemen, despicable and more despicable are not worth the pains of distinction; when, therefore, you do not interrogate me as to the opinion which is specifically

ascribed to me, I must conclude that you view it as within the limits to which the animadversions of political opponents upon each other may justifiably extend, and consequently as not warranting the idea of it which Dr. Cooper appears to entertain. If so, what precise inference could you draw as a guide for your conduct, were I to acknowledge that I had expressed an opinion of you still more despicable than the one which is particularized? How could you be sure that even this opinion had exceeded the bounds which you yourself deem admissible between political opponents?

But I forbear further comment on the embarrassment to which the requisition you have made naturally leads. The occasion forbids a more ample illustration, though nothing could be more easy than to pursue it. Repeating, that I cannot reconcile it with propriety to make the acknowledgment you desire, I will add that I deem it inadmissible, on principle, to consent to be interrogated as to the justness of the inferences which may be drawn by others from what I may have said of a political opponent in the course of fifteen years' competition. If there were no other objection to it, this is sufficient, that it would tend to expose my sincerity and delicacy to injurious imputation from every person who may at any time have conceived the import of my expressions differently from what I may then have intended or may afterwards recollect. I stand ready to avow or disavow, promptly and explicitly, any precise or definite opinion which I may be charged with having declared of any gentleman. More than this cannot fitly be expected from me, and especially it cannot be reasonably expected that I shall enter into an explanation upon a basis so vague as that which you have adopted. I trust, on mature reflection, you will see the matter in the same light with me. If not, I can only regret the circumstance, and must abide the consequences.

The publication of Dr. Cooper was never seen by me until after the receipt of your letter.

BURR TO HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, June 21, 1804.

SIR:

Your letter of the 20th inst. has been this day received. Having considered it attentively, I regret to find in it nothing of that sincerity and delicacy which you profess to value.

Political opposition can never absolve gentlemen from the necessity of a rigid adherence to the laws of honor and the rules of decorum. I neither claim such privilege nor indulge it in others.

The common-sense of mankind affixes to the epithet adopted by Dr. Cooper, the idea of dishonor. It has been publicly applied to me under the sanction of your name. The question is not whether he has understood the meaning of the word, or has used it according to syntax and with grammatical accuracy, but whether you have authorized this application, either directly or by uttering expressions or opinions derogatory to my honor. The time "when" is in your own knowledge, but no way material to me, as the calumny has now first been disclosed, so as to become the subject of my notice, and as the effect is present and palpable. Your letter has furnished me with new reasons for requiring a definite reply.

HAMILTON TO BURR.

NEW YORK, June 22, 1804.

SIR:

Your first letter, in a style too peremptory, made a demand, in my opinion, unprecedented and unwarrantable. My answer, pointing out the embarrassment, gave you an opportunity of taking a less exceptionable course. You have not chosen to do it; but by your last letter, received this day, containing expressions indecorous and improper, you have increased the difficulties to explanation intrinsically incident to the nature of your application. If by a "definite reply," you mean the direct avowal or disavowal

required in your first letter, I have no other answer to give, than that which has already been given. If you mean any thing different, admitting of greater latitude, it is requisite you should explain.

W. P. VAN NESS* TO HAMILTON.

June 23, 1804.

SIR:

In the afternoon of yesterday, I reported to Col. Burr the result of my last interview with you and appointed the evening to receive his further instructions. Some private engagements, however, prevented me from calling on him till morning. On my return to the city, I found upon inquiry, both at your office and house, that you had returned to your residence in the country.

Lest an interview there might be less agreeable to you than elsewhere, I have taken the liberty of addressing you this note to inquire when and where it will be most convenient to you to receive a communication.

VAN NESS TO MAJOR NATHANIEL PENDLETON.†

June 26, 1804.

SIR:

The letter which you yesterday delivered me, and your subsequent communication, in Col. Burr's opinion, evince no disposition on the part of General Hamilton to come to a satisfactory accommodation. The injury complained of and the reparation expected are so definitely expressed in Col. Burr's letter of the 21st instant, that there is not perceived a necessity for further explanation on his part. The difficulty that would result from confining the inquiry to any particular times and occasions must be manifest. The denial of a specified conversation only, would leave strong implication that on other occasions improper language had been used. When and where injurious opinions and expres-

* Burr's second in the duel.

† Pendleton was Hamilton's second in the duel.

sions have been uttered by General Hamilton must be best known to him, and of him only will Col. Burr inquire. No denial or declaration will be satisfactory, unless it be general, so as to wholly exclude the ideas that rumors derogatory to Col. Burr's honor have originated with General Hamilton, or have been fairly inferred from any thing he has said. A definite reply to a requisition of this nature was demanded by Col. Burr's letter of the twenty-first inst. This being refused, invites the alternative referred to in General Hamilton's letter of the 20th. It was required by the position in which the controversy was placed by General Hamilton on Friday last, and I was immediately furnished with a communication demanding a personal interview. The necessity of this measure has not, in the opinion of Col. Burr, been diminished by the General's last letter, or any communication which has since been received. I am consequently again instructed to deliver to you a message, as soon as it may be convenient for you to receive it. I beg, therefore, you will be so good as to inform me at what hour I can have the pleasure of seeing you.

PENDLETON TO VAN NESS.

June 26, 1804.

SIR:

I have communicated the letter which you did me the honor to write to me of this date, to General Hamilton. The expectations now disclosed on the part of Col. Burr appear to him to have greatly extended the original ground of inquiry, and instead of presenting a particular and definite case for explanation, seem to aim at nothing less than an inquisition into his most confidential conversations, as well as others, through the whole period of his acquaintance with Col. Burr. While he was prepared to meet the particular case fairly and fully, he thinks it inadmissible that he should be expected to answer at large as to every thing that he may possibly have said, in relation to the character of Col. Burr, at any time, or upon any occasion. Though he is not

conscious that any charges which are in circulation to the prejudice of Col. Burr have originated with him, except one which may have been so considered, and which has long since been fully explained between Col. Burr and himself, yet he cannot consent to be questioned generally as to any rumors which may be afloat derogatory to the character of Col. Burr, without specification of the several rumors, many of them probably unknown to him. He does not, however, mean to authorize any conclusion as to the real nature of his conduct in relation to Col. Burr, by his declining so loose and vague a basis of explanation, and he disavows an unwillingness to come to a satisfactory, provided it be an honorable, accommodation.

His objection is, the very indefinite ground which Col. Burr has assumed, in which he is sorry to be able to discern nothing short of premeditated hostility. Presuming, therefore, that it will be adhered to, he has instructed me to receive the message which you have it in charge to deliver. For this purpose I shall be at home and at your accommodation to-morrow morning, from eight to ten o'clock.*

VAN NESS TO PENDLETON.

June 27, 1804.

SIR:

The letter which I had the honor to receive from you, under date of yesterday, states, among other things, that in General Hamilton's opinion, Col. Burr has taken a very indefinite ground, in which he evinces nothing short of pre-

* Note from the "History of the Republic," vii., 812.—'T is not unworthy of notice, that on the very day of this communication, Hamilton, who had been consulted by a poor, illiterate man, in the humblest walks of life, wrote this note: "Dear Sir: I should like to see you on the subject of a poor fellow, Peter Drinker, who says he has been employed by you, and appears unfortunate, which is his title to my attention. Yours truly, A. H. June 26, 1804. P. G. Stuyvesant, Esq." This much-respected gentleman relates: "I reproved the man for the freedom in which he had indulged, and undertook to convince him of the impropriety of troubling General Hamilton with his concerns." His reply was: "Oh, no, sir, he treated me very kindly."

determined hostility, and that General Hamilton thinks it inadmissible that the inquiry should extend to his confidential as well as other conversations. In this Col. Burr can only reply, that secret whispers, traducing his fame and impeaching his honor, are, at least, equally injurious with slanders publicly uttered; that General Hamilton had at no time and in no place a right to use any such injurious expressions, and the partial negative he is disposed to give, with the reservation he wishes to make, are proofs that he has done the injury specified.

Col. Burr's request was, in the first instance, proposed in a form the most simple, in order that General Hamilton might give to the affair that course to which he might be induced by his temper and his knowledge of facts. Col. Burr trusted with confidence that, from the frankness of a soldier and the candor of a gentleman, he might expect an ingenuous declaration. That if, as he had reason to believe, General Hamilton had used expressions derogatory to his honor, he would have had the magnanimity to retract them; and that if, from his language, injurious inferences had been improperly drawn, he would have perceived the propriety of correcting errors which might thus have been widely diffused. With these impressions, Col. Burr was greatly surprised at receiving a letter which he considered as evasive, and which in manner he deemed not altogether decorous. In one expectation, however, he was not wholly deceived, for the close of General Hamilton's letter contained an intimation that if Col. Burr should dislike his refusal to acknowledge or deny, he was ready to meet the consequences. This Col. Burr deemed a sort of defiance, and would have felt justified in making it the basis of an immediate message. But as the communication contained something concerning the indefiniteness of the request, as he believed it rather the offspring of false pride than of reflection, and as he felt the utmost reluctance to proceed to extremities while any other hope remained, his request was repeated in terms more explicit. The replies and propositions on the part of Gen.

Hamilton have, in Col. Burr's opinion, been constantly in substance the same.

Col. Burr disavows all motives of premeditated hostility, a charge by which he thinks insult added to injury. He feels as a gentleman should feel when his honor is impeached or assailed; and without sensations of hostility or wishes of revenge, he is determined to vindicate that honor at such hazard as the nature of the case demands.

The length to which this correspondence has extended, only tending to prove that the satisfactory redress, earnestly desired, cannot be obtained, he deems it useless to offer any proposition, except the simple message, which I shall now have the honor to deliver.

REMARKS BY HAMILTON ON THE LETTER OF JUNE 27, 1804.

Whether the observations on this letter are designed merely to justify the result which is indicated in the close of the letter, or may be intended to give an opening for rendering any thing explicit which may have been deemed vague heretofore, can only be judged of by the sequel. At any rate, it appears to me necessary not to be misunderstood. Mr. Pendleton is therefore authorized to say, that in the course of the present discussion, written or verbal, there has been no intention to evade, defy, or insult, but a sincere disposition to avoid extremities, if it could be done with propriety. With this view, Gen. Hamilton has been ready to enter into a frank and free explanation on any and every object of a specific nature, but not to answer a general and abstract inquiry embracing a period too long for any accurate recollection, and exposing him to unpleasant criticisms from, or unpleasant discussions with, any and every person who may have understood him in an unfavorable sense. This (admitting that he could answer in a manner the most satisfactory to Col. Burr) he should deem inadmissible in principle and precedent, and humiliating in practice. To this therefore he

can never submit. Frequent allusion has been made to slanders said to be in circulation. Whether they are openly or in whispers, they have a form and shape and might be specified. If the alternative alluded to in the close of the letter is definitely tendered, it must be accepted; the time, place, and manner to be afterwards regulated. I should not think it right in the midst of a Circuit Court to withdraw my services from those who may have confided important interests to me and expose them to the embarrassment of seeking other counsel, who may not have time to be sufficiently instructed in their case. I shall also want a little time to make some arrangements respecting my own affairs.

STATEMENT BY HAMILTON AS TO HIS MOTIVES IN MEETING BURR.

On my expected interview with Col. Burr, I think it proper to make some remarks explanatory of my conduct, motives, and views. I was certainly desirous of avoiding this interview for the most cogent reasons:

(1) My religious and moral principles are strongly opposed to the practice of duelling, and it would ever give me pain to be obliged to shed the blood of a fellow-creature in a private combat forbidden by the laws.

(2) My wife and children are extremely dear to me, and my life is of the utmost importance to them in various views.

(3) I feel a sense of obligation towards my creditors; who, in case of accident to me by the forced sale of my property, may be in some degree sufferers. I did not think myself at liberty as a man of probity lightly to expose them to this hazard.

(4) I am conscious of no ill-will to Col. Burr, distinct from political opposition, which, as I trust, has proceeded from pure and upright motives.

Lastly, I shall hazard much and can possibly gain nothing by the issue of the interview.

But it was, as I conceive, impossible for me to avoid it. There were intrinsic difficulties in the thing and artificial

embarrassments, from the manner of proceeding on the part of Col. Burr.

Intrinsic, because it is not to be denied that my animadversions on the political principles, character, and views of Col. Burr have been extremely severe; and on different occasions I, in common with many others, have made very unfavorable criticisms on particular instances of the private conduct of this gentleman. In proportion as these impressions were entertained with sincerity and uttered with motives and for purposes which might appear to me commendable, would be the difficulty (until they could be removed by evidence of their being erroneous) of explanation or apology. The disavowal required of me by Col. Burr in a general and indefinite form was out of my power, if it had really been proper for me to submit to be questioned, but I was sincerely of opinion that this could not be, and in this opinion I was confirmed by that of a very moderate and judicious friend whom I consulted. Besides that, Col. Burr appeared to me to assume, in the first instance, a tone unnecessarily peremptory and menacing, and, in the second, positively offensive. Yet I wished, as far as might be practicable, to leave a door open to accommodation. This, I think, will be inferred from the written communication made by me and by my directions, and would be confirmed by the conversations between Mr. Van Ness and myself which arose out of the subject. I am not sure whether, under all the circumstances, I did not go further in the attempt to accommodate than a punctilious delicacy will justify. If so, I hope the motives I have stated will excuse me. It is not my design, by what I have said, to affix any odium on the conduct of Col. Burr in this case. He doubtless has heard of animadversions of mine which bore very hard upon him, and it is probable that as usual they were accompanied with some falsehoods. He may have supposed himself under a necessity of acting as he has done. I hope the ground of his proceeding have been such as ought to satisfy his own conscience. I trust, at the same time, that the world will do

me the justice to believe that I have not censured him on light grounds nor from unworthy inducements. I certainly have had strong reasons for what I have said, though it is possible that in some particulars I may have been influenced by misconstruction or misinformation. It is also my ardent wish that I may have been more mistaken than I think I have been; and that he, by his future conduct, may show himself worthy of all confidence and esteem and prove an ornament and a blessing to the country. As well, because it is possible that I may have injured Col. Burr, however convinced myself that my opinions and declarations have been well-founded, as from my general principles and temper in relation to similar affairs, I have resolved, if our interview is conducted in the usual manner, and it pleases God to give me the opportunity, to reserve and throw away my first fire, and I have thoughts even of reserving my second fire, and thus giving a double opportunity to Col. Burr to pause and reflect. It is not, however, my intention to enter into any explanations on the ground. Apology from principle, I hope, rather than pride, is out of the question. To those who, with me, abhorring the practice of duelling, may think that I ought on no account to have added to the number of bad examples, I answer that my relative situation, as well in public as private, enforcing all the considerations which constitute what men of the world denominate honor, imposed on me (as I thought) a peculiar necessity not to decline the call. The ability to be in future useful, whether in resisting mischief or in effecting good, in those crises of our public affairs which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with public prejudice in this particular.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

July 10, 1804.

This letter, my dear Eliza, will not be delivered to you, unless I shall first have terminated my earthly career, to begin, as I humbly hope, from redeeming grace and divine

mercy, a happy immortality. If it had been possible for me to have avoided the interview, my love for you and my precious children would have been alone a decisive motive. But it was not possible, without sacrifices which would have rendered me unworthy of your esteem. I need not tell you of the pangs I feel from the idea of quitting you, and exposing you to the anguish I know you would feel. Nor could I dwell on the topic, lest it should unman me. The consolations of religion, my beloved, can alone support you; and these you have a right to enjoy. Fly to the bosom of your God, and be comforted. With my last idea I shall cherish the sweet hope of meeting you in a better world. Adieu, best of wives—best of women. Embrace all my darling children for me.

TO MRS. HAMILTON.

Tuesday evening, 10 o'clock.

MY BELOVED ELIZA:

Mrs. Mitchell * is the person in the world to whom, as a friend, I am under the greatest obligation. I have not hitherto done my duty to her. But resolved to repair my omission to her as much as possible, I have encouraged her to come to this country, and intend, if it shall be in my power, to render the evening of her days comfortable. But if it shall please God to put this out of my power, and to enable you hereafter to be of service to her, I entreat you to do it, and to treat her with the tenderness of a sister. This is my second letter. The scruples of a Christian have determined me to expose my own life to any extent, rather than subject myself to the guilt of taking the life of another. This much increases my hazards, and redoubles my pangs for you. But you had rather I should die innocent than live guilty. Heaven can preserve me, and I humbly hope will; but, in the contrary event, I charge you to remember

* The sister of Mr. Peter Lytton and of Hamilton's mother, according to the statements in J. C. Hamilton's unfinished life of his father.

that you are a Christian. God's will be done! The will of a merciful God must be good. Once more,

Adieu, my darling, darling wife.

[This interesting paper or letter, now first printed, is unaddressed and undated, but it must have been written after 1800, and perhaps not long before the writer's death. I owe it to the kindness of the gentlemen in New York, whose letter I am so unfortunate as to have lost. See page 35.]

Herewith is a general statement of my pecuniary affairs, in which there can be no material error.

The result is that calculating my property at what it stands me in, I am now worth about £10,000, and that estimating according to what my lands are now selling for and are likely to fetch, the surplus beyond my debts may fairly be stated at nearly double that sum; yet I am pained to be obliged to entertain doubts, whether, if an accident should happen to me, by which the sales of my property should come to be forced, it would even be sufficient to pay my debts. In a situation like this, it is perhaps due to my reputation to explain why I have made so considerable an establishment in the country. This explanation shall be submitted.

To men who have been so much harassed in the base world as myself, it is natural to look forward to a comforable retirement, in the sequel of life, as a principal desideratum. This desire I have felt in the strongest manner, and to prepare for it has latterly been a favorite object. I thought I might not only expect to accomplish the object, but might reasonably aim at it and pursue the preparatory measures, from the following considerations:

It has been for some time past pretty well ascertained to my mind, that the emoluments of my profession would prove equal to the maintenance of my family and the gradual discharge of my debts, within a period to the end of which my faculties for business might be expected to extend in full energy. I think myself warranted to estimate the annual product of those emoluments at twelve thousand

dollars at the least. My expenses while the first improvements of my country establishment were going on have been great, but they would this summer and fall reach the point at which, it is my intention they should stop, at least till I should be better able than at present to add to them; and after a fair examination founded upon an actual account of my expenditures, I am persuaded that a plan I have contemplated for the next and succeeding years would bring my expenses of every kind within the compass of four thousand dollars yearly, exclusive of the interest of my country establishment. To this limit I have been resolved to reduce them, even though it should be necessary to lease that establishment for a few years. In the meantime, my lands now in a course of sale and settlement would accelerate the extinguishment of my debts, and in the end leave me a handsome clear property. It was also allowable for me to take into view collaterally the expectations of my wife: which have been of late partly realized. She is now entitled to a property of between 2,000 and 3,000 pounds (as I compute), by descent from her mother, and her father is understood to possess a large estate. I feel all the delicacy of this allusion, but the occasion, I trust, will plead my excuses, and that venerable father, I am sure, will pardon. He knows well all the nicety of my past conduct.

Viewing the matter in these different aspects, I trust the opinion of candid men will be that there has been no impropriety in my conduct, especially when it is taken into the calculation, that my country establishment, though costly, promises, by the progressive rise of property on this island and the felicity of its situation, to become more and more valuable. My chief apology is to those friends who have from mere kindness endorsed my paper discounted at the banks. On mature reflection I have thought it justifiable to secure them in preference to other creditors, lest perchance there should be a deficit. Yet, while this may save them from eventual loss, it will not exempt them from present inconvenience. As to this I can only throw myself

upon their kindness and entreat the indulgence of the banks for them. Perhaps the request may be supposed entitled to some regard. In the event which would bring this paper to the public eye, one thing at least would be put beyond doubt. This is that my public labors have amounted to an absolute sacrifice of the interests of my family, and that in all pecuniary concerns the delicacy no less than the probity of conduct in public stations has been such as to defy even the shadow of a question.

Indeed, I have not enjoyed the ordinary advantages incident to my military services. Being a member of Congress while the question of the commutation of the half pay of the army for a sum in gross was in debate, delicacy and a desire to be useful to the army by removing the idea of my having an interest in the question, induced me to write to the Secretary of War and relinquish my claim to half pay, which or the equivalent I have never received. Neither have I even applied for the lands allowed by the United States to officers of my rank. Nor did I ever obtain from this State the allowance of lands made to officers of similar rank. It is true that having served through the latter periods of the war on the general staff of the United States and not in the line of this State, I could not claim the allowance as a matter of course; but having before the war resided in this State, and having entered the military career at the head of a company of artillery raised for the particular defence of this State, I had better pretensions to the allowance than others to whom it was actually made, yet it has not been extended to me. A. H.

RULES FOR MR. PHILIP HAMILTON.

From the first of April to the first of October he is to rise not later than six o'clock; the rest of the year not later than seven. If earlier, he will deserve commendation. Ten will be his hour of going to bed throughout the year.

From the time he is dressed in the morning till nine

o'clock (the time for breakfast excepted), he is to read law. At nine he goes to the office, and continues there till dinner time. He will be occupied partly in writing and partly in reading law.

After dinner he reads law at home till five o'clock. From this time till seven he disposes of his time as he pleases. From seven to ten he reads and studies whatever he pleases.

From twelve on Saturday he is at liberty to amuse himself.

On Sunday he will attend the morning church. The rest of the day may be applied to innocent recreations.

He must not depart from any of these rules without my permission.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

In the name of God, Amen!

I, Alexander Hamilton, of the State of New York, counsellor at law, do make this my last will and testament, as follows: First, I appoint John B. Church, Nicholas Fish, and Nathaniel Pendleton, of the city aforesaid, esquires, to be executors and trustees of this my will, and I devise to them, their heirs, and assigns, as joint tenants, and not as tenants in common, all my estate, real and personal, whatsoever and wheresoever upon trust, at their discretion to sell and dispose of the same at such time and times, in such manner, and upon such terms as they the survivors and survivor shall think fit, and out of the proceeds to pay all the debts which I shall owe at the time of my decease, in whole, if the fund shall be sufficient, proportionally, if it shall be insufficient, and the residue, if any there shall be, to pay and deliver to my excellent and dear wife, Elizabeth Hamilton.

Though, if it please God to spare my life, I may look for a considerable surplus out of my present property; yet if he should speedily call me to the eternal world, a forced sale, as is usual, may possibly render it insufficient to satisfy my

debts. I pray God that something may remain for the maintenance and education of my dear wife and children. But should it on the contrary happen that there is not enough for the payment of my debts, I entreat my dear children, if they or any of them shall ever be able, to make up the deficiency. I without hesitation commit to their delicacy a wish which is dictated by my own. Though conscious that I have too far sacrificed the interests of my family to public avocations, and on this account have the less claim to burthen my children, yet I trust in their magnanimity to appreciate, as they ought, this my request. In so unfavorable an event of things, the support of their dear mother, with the most respectful and tender attention, is a duty all the sacredness of which they will feel. Probably her own patrimonial resources will preserve her from indigence. But in all situations they are charged to bear in mind that she has been to them the most devoted and best of mothers. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my hand, the ninth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and four.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Signed, sealed, published, and as and for his last will and testament in our presence, who have subscribed our names in his presence.

DOMINICK T. BLAKE.
GRAHAM NEWELL.
INEZ B. VALLEAU.

EPITAPH ON A TABLET, BY THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI, IN TRINITY CHURCH, NEW YORK.

This Tablet
does not profess to perpetuate
the memory of a man,
to whom the age has produced
no superior;
nor to emblazon worth;
eminently conspicuous in every feature
of his country's greatness;
nor to anticipate posterity in their
judgment of the loss which she has
sustained by his premature death;
but to attest,
in the simplicity of grief,
the veneration and anguish which fill
the hearts of the members of the
New York State Society of
Cincinnati
on every recollection
of their illustrious brother,
Major-General
Alexander Hamilton.

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